

“THE MOST MULTI-ETHNIC COUNTRY IN THE WORLD”
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN RUSSIA’S EURASIANIST POLITICAL NARRATIVE

By
Lex Trienen, B.A.

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Masters of Arts
in
Arctic and Northern Studies

University of Alaska Fairbanks

May 2019

APPROVED:

Dr. Brandon Boylan, Committee Chair
Dr. Mary Ehrlander, Committee Member
Dr. Alex Hirsch, Committee Member
Dr. Brandon Boylan and Dr. Mary Ehrlander, Co-Directors
Arctic and Northern Studies
Dr. Todd Sherman, Dean, *College of Liberal Arts*
Dr. Michael Castellini, *Dean of the Graduate School*

Abstract

Since 2012, scholars have taken a renewed look at the philosophical and political ideas of Eurasianism within Russia to explain President Vladimir Putin's conduct and the Russian public's response to it. Eurasianism in its current form posits that the Russian state plays a unique role in the history of the world in opposing the avaricious, agnostic, and culturally oppressive "West," while uniting and elevating the peoples of the Eurasian continent in a peaceful, organic and spiritual "Eurasia." Indigenous peoples play a distinctive role in this narrative. Both the United States and Russia have Indigenous populations that have been subjected to both passive neglect and active violence over the past several centuries and currently suffer from poor social conditions compared to the dominant ethnic groups of their respective countries. This thesis addresses the question of how the Russian media's portrayal of Native Americans diverges from that of its own Indigenous peoples in order to perpetuate this Eurasian narrative. Articles were collected from various news outlets in Russia, coded for Eurasianist themes using the Atlas.ti program, and analyzed by news outlet, date published, and topic. The analysis finds that the Russian media portrays Indigenous peoples in Russia as largely having constructive working relationships with the Kremlin, while they depict Native Americans as striving towards secession and mired in constant conflict with the U.S. government, but having surreptitious affinities towards the Eurasian civilizational model.

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Chapter 1 History of the Development of Eurasianism

1.1 Introduction: the Question

In December 2004, in the midst of nationwide confusion about the country's role in the post-Communist, twenty-first century world, Russia's President Vladimir Putin and the national legislature passed an inconspicuous rebranding of a long-celebrated national holiday. November 4th, henceforth, was to be celebrated as the "Day of National Unity" in honor of a little-known historical defeat of Polish and Lithuanian forces who had been occupying Moscow in 1612. According to official government news outlets, the holiday celebrated the day that Novgorodian leaders Kuzma Minin and Dmitry Pozharsky finally ousted the European invaders, restoring government to the land after a decades-long stretch known as the "Time of Troubles" in which the population was ravaged by disease, violence, and political uncertainty. The next year, in 1613, the national assembly elected Mikhail Romanov as the Tsar of Russia, establishing the Romanov dynasty that survived until the Revolution in 1917. The official Kremlin line emphasized the nature of Minin and Pozharsky's army, which it portrayed as a ragtag crew of diverse social, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. "In this period, known as the Time of Troubles, the entire country lacked a government, and Russia was plunged into a civil war, nearly in danger of collapse with a loss of independence and autonomy," says Newsru, a prominent online newspaper, "And it was in that very time that the people themselves stood up in defense of their fatherland, realizing the necessity of uniting their strengths before internal and

external enemies . . . Representatives of many other religions and peoples fought side by side with the Russian Orthodox people.”¹

Despite the inspiring and patriotic rhetoric, little of the story neatly aligns with the historical facts. While the Novgorodian militia certainly helped free Moscow, a rival Cossack army had already done most of the heavy lifting; while the Romanovs eventually brought the civil war to an end, it raged for years after 1612; and while Orthodoxy was the predominant religion in the area, historians still cannot determine the religious makeup of the citizen army.² Indeed, even the date of November 4 resulted from a miscalculation by the Russian legislators when they translated from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar.³ As scholar Mariya Omelicheva notes in her article about the holiday, “all in all, there was little ‘national’ or ‘people’s’ unity behind the events of November 1612.”⁴ The question of how this loose-ended battle clouded by a haze of historical uncertainty became a beacon of national unity for modern Russia is even more interesting when viewed from the perspective of Indigenous Peoples. Russian media, seen by many as an arm of the Russian government and its foreign policy, pays particular attention to the Indigenous groups of Russia in their coverage of nationwide celebrations of the Day of National Unity. *TASS*, the official wire service of Russia, published an article in 2017 on the eve of the celebration entitled “Representatives of the Indigenous Small-numbered People to Widely Celebrate Day of National Unity,” in which it quotes the current president of RAIPON, the

¹ “V Rossii Vpervye otmechaetsa den’ narodnogo edinstvo.” (“In Russia for the first time is celebrated the Day of National Unity.”) *Newsru*. November 4, 2005, accessed October 30, 2018. <https://www.newsru.com/russia/04nov2005/edinstvo.html>

² Mariya Omelicheva, “A New Russian Holiday has more behind it than national unity: the political functions of historical commemorations.” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 63, no. 3. (September 2017): 432, accessed October 23, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajph.12375>

³ Ibid 432

⁴ Ibid 432

umbrella advocacy group for forty-one Indigenous groups in Russia: “Russia is perhaps the most multi-ethnic country in the world.” he says, “This holiday is dedicated to the unity of peoples and our nation, and we will celebrate it with widely.”⁵ Articles in different media trumpet Indigenous Peoples dance performances, cultural exhibitions, and parades.

This integration of Indigenous Peoples into the Day of National Unity is particularly interesting when considering that in 1612 Russia was a fraction of the territory of what it would eventually become. Western Siberia was only just beginning to be subjected to the Russian imperial yoke: in 1620 Russia extended approximately to the Yenisei River valley, which makes up only about half of modern day Siberia.⁶ Indigenous peoples such as the Yakuts, the Korak, and the Chukchi were only peripherally exposed to the Russian government, if at all. Even those who were, such as the Khanty, Mansi, and Tungus, had only recently been conquered, and were not fully integrated into Russian society, paying only tribute in furs to the unknown tsar in Moscow. It is in many ways confounding that a holiday established in memorial of military victory could be reconstrued as a day of “unity” among the diverse people who inhabit the expansive territory of the modern-day Russia, many of whom later violently resisted the expansion of that country.

The triumph of Eurasianism as a ruling ideology offers a compelling explanation for the apparent adoption of this historical narrative. Eurasianism is a complex philosophy and narrative that originated in the emigré community in 1920s Europe that re-orientes Eurasia as the center of

⁵ “Predstaviteli korennykh malochislennikh narodov shiroko otmetyat Den’ Narodnogo Edinstvo” (“Representatives of Indigenous small-numbered people widely celebrate the Day of National Unity”) *TASS*. November 3, 2017. Accessed November 15, 2018. <https://tass.ru/obshchestvo/4701838>

⁶ Forsyth, James. *A history of the peoples of Siberia: Russia's north Asian colony, 1581-1990*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 38

global history as opposed to a backwater of Asia or Europe. While recent interest has surged due to Eurasianist philosophers' celebration of chauvinistic and expansionist foreign policy, the philosophical roots of Eurasianism have much less to do with expansionism and more with the origins and mutual cooperation of the diverse peoples who inhabit the lands from the Volga to Vladivostok. It is a territory that encompasses an ethnically, historically, and religiously diverse group, including forty officially recognized Indigenous "small-numbered" peoples, as they are called in Russia. Eurasianists, both early and current, have obsessed over the idea of what a people is, how they come to be, and what role Russia has in uniting the people of Eurasia. Their answers sometimes venture into the absurd, but understanding the depth of the intellectual energy devoted to this concept can help elucidate how and why Russians see themselves as a great power worthy of respect, and why they believe this vast and diverse country is destined to be united under one government.

1.2 The History and Development of Eurasianism

Born from the passions and patriotisms of Russia's top academics who had been forced into exile by the Bolshevik revolution, Eurasianism blurred the line between science and storytelling, making it all the more intriguing. Nikolai Trubetskoy and Roman Jakobson, two pioneering phonologists who developed an early idea of phoneme shifts that would define twentieth century linguistics, were some of the first to propose a scientific basis for the future greatness of their lost country of Russia. Trubetskoy, in particular, argued that the phoneme shifts he had documented across the vast expanses of the Eurasian continent proved a common direction of the diverse peoples that had previously made up the Russian Empire. Petr Savitsky,

another prominent intellectual of pre-Soviet Russia, applied his geographical background to what he saw as near-perfect geological symmetry of Eurasia to explain the Russian Empire's long history of trade between the fur hunters of the North, the pastoral nomads of the steppes, and the agriculturalists of the Black Earth zone, and which predicted a natural and inevitable political integration in the future. Savitsky also drew on British philosopher Halford Mackinder, who popularized a view of the world in which the economically advanced sea powers vie for global dominance with the more agriculturalist land powers, and he suggested that Eurasia, embodied by Russia, was the scion of the global heartland land powers. Russia's geopolitical role, in this view, was the counter pole to the West, a claim Savitsky made in the first official Eurasianist publication, *Turn to the East*, published in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1921. Was this really science though, as Trubetskoy and Savitsky suggested, or was it a story the embittered exile-scholars told themselves to grieve the loss of their motherland? Was it, as journalist Charles Clover suggests in his book on Eurasianism's influence on Russia, a story that was "more therapy than scholarship" for early proponents and a "repository for their bitterness"? The Eurasianist movement flourished for several years, but in the late 1920s imploded from internal personal tensions between members that were exploited by agents of the Soviet secret police. Trubetskoy, the leading intellectual force of the movement then renounced his earlier manifestos on the movement as harmful demagoguery without scientific merit,⁷ making any continuation of a serious movement unthinkable.

⁷ Charles Clover. *Black wind, white snow: The rise of Russia's new nationalism*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 10.

But the 1980s saw another unthinkable development: the disintegration of the Soviet Union. As republic after republic broke away from the central government of Moscow, the old Marxist ideology that suggested that national differences would eventually be annihilated by a realization of a utopian socialism no longer held any credence. Not only was the Soviet Union's existence threatened but so was Russia's, as regions strived for more and more autonomy from Moscow led by autonomous ethnic republics like Yakutia and Tatarstan. It was unclear whether Russia could survive as a united political entity, in large part because of ethnic nationalist forces.

From the ashes of the Marxist narrative rose the voice of Lev Gumilev, a historian of the Scythian civilization and former Gulag prisoner, as he asserted a new *raison d'être* for Russia. Casting aside the old ideological tenets of Marxist universalism, Gumilev asserted that Russia's existence had a biological and cosmic foundation in his theories of *ethnogenesis*. Civilizations, according to Gumilev, are biological organisms that are born out of a burst of some sort of cosmic energy, live out their lives through expansion, and eventually die out after a life of approximately 1,200 years. Russia's civilization was in the middle of its lifespan having been born in 1400 C.E. during a Mongol yoke battle. To deny Russia's right to continue to exist as a vast, multi-ethnic polity would be to deny the laws of physics and biology. Gumilev, who died in 1993, became a legendary and prophetic figure in social sciences in Russia and former Soviet countries, despite ignorance of him in the West. The Russian regime's ill-fated adoption of principles of Atlanticism and free market Liberalism in the 1990s gave way to the Putin era of the 2000s, which quickly pared back Yeltsin's reforms and appeared to adopt concrete tenets of Eurasianism into its governing philosophy.

More specifically, Russia asserted itself as an antipode to the West's hegemony and a geopolitical actor in itself. Aleksandr Panarin and Aleksandr Dugin, whom Woodrow Wilson Center scholar Marlene Laruelle would name the neo-Eurasianists, propounded these views to a twenty-first century audience that had lived through the cruel experiment of "Shock Therapy" of the 1990s, which had resulted in food shortages and social disruption across the country. In 1999, Aleksandr Dugin authored an book entitled the *Foundations of Geopolitics*, which would go on to be used as an influential textbook in some of the top military colleges in Russia, and which called for the dismemberment of Ukraine and the revitalization of Russia's unique geopolitical role in opposing the United States and its ideological hegemony. Dugin and Panarin argued that the Western model of "nation states" had resulted in the oppression or eradication of countless cultures under the dominance of the ethnic majorities, and that their colonization of the world, if unchecked, would eventually result in a cultural genocide of unprecedented proportion. At the same time, Dugin and others proclaimed that the era of traditional warfare had passed and that the new battlefield in our "Era of Information" was a corresponding "War of Information" waged through twenty-first century media. Dugin's prescription fit in well with processes that had been ongoing in Russian society, politics, and media.

1.3 Russian Government and Media

Dugin's synthesis of an active information campaign and a strong story of Eurasianism lie at the heart of this thesis. Mass media serves as an indirect entry point for analyzing the often inscrutable thinking of the Kremlin under the Putin regime. The current mass media landscape,

while not under direct censorship as it was during the Soviet Era, is still precisely orchestrated to advance certain themes such as the territorial integrity of Russia, the uniting force of a strangely secularized Russian Orthodox Church, and the supreme patriarchal infallibility of President Putin. These concepts have been reinforced through violent intimidation, including the murder of several journalists who questioned the basis for Russia's intrusion in Georgia in 2008, for example. Russian journalists, following a Soviet tradition of searching the top for hints of the official party line, largely follow in step in a process of self-censorship that bypasses any official regulatory agency. Journalists become (sometimes unwitting) agents in their civilizational mission of Eurasianism established by the central government, a role that puts them in opposition to their western counterparts, who see themselves as a check on the power of the government.

In fact, this media intimidation plays a role in a broader history of what many view as the large scale information war between the east, embodied by Russia, and the West, most prominently embodied by the United States. The official Russian National Security Concept, as well as Russia's Arctic Strategy, emphasize the use of mass media to highlight Russia's common values. According to Russia's National Security Strategy, these values are "the family, creative labor, service to the homeland, the norms of morals and morality, humanism, charity, fairness, mutual assistance, collectivism, the historical unity of the peoples of Russia, and the continuity of our motherland's history,"⁸ which will oppose nefarious efforts by an unnamed enemy (though presumably the United States) to introduce corrupting values to Russian society. The Russian government views its forty-one Indigenous groups, despite their differences, as

⁸ Russian National Security Strategy to 2020. Adopted December 31, 2015. Section 78. Accessed December 1, 2018. <http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Internacional/2016/Russian-National-Security-Strategy-31Dec2015.pdf>

embodying these traditional, communitarian values in concert with the dominant Russian ethnicity.

Russia's information strategy is not just defensive, however. Russian media also gives inordinate attention to the Indigenous Peoples of another continent that has a similar history of interaction between the peoples and the national government: the United States. While giving the poor material conditions of Native Americans their due, Kremlin-aligned media pay particular attention to the political disenfranchisement of Native Americans. News items covering secessionist movements, in particular, draw attention of the Russian media, who paint an America at the verge of implosion, largely due to Native American discontent.

1.4 Research Methods

The research component of this thesis analyzed five separate Kremlin-aligned print news media sources, and two independent sources, to identify how Eurasianist themes are or are not actualized in the context of Indigenous peoples. I collected data (print, Russian-language news articles) through a Google site search in April and May of 2018 using different variations on common terms in Russian that refer to Indigenous peoples. I gathered the top fifty results from each of the five Kremlin-aligned news sources, as well as from two independent news sources. Drawing on Chapter 2 of this thesis, which analyzed the intellectual history of Eurasianism as it relates to minority nationalities, I developed general themes for coding individual units (sentences or paragraphs, depending on the context). Then, in a preliminary analysis, I sharpened and expanded on these themes to create a comprehensive code list with detailed criteria for identifying the codes. Finally, I used these codes to mark themes in the articles. I used the

Atlas.ti program for the thematic coding which allowed for quantitative and qualitative exploration.

In general, many components of the Russian media's portrayal of Indigenous peoples resembled Soviet era depictions: happy, empowered Natives in Russia counterposed with the impoverished and oppressed Natives in the U.S. But other unexpected contrasts emerged in the Russian media's portrayal of Russian and American Natives. One of the most unexpected findings, Kremlin-aligned sources hinted at underlying affinities between Native Americans and the Indigenous Peoples of Russia. United by cultural attributes including language and communitarian values, Native Americans are suggested to be a latent force of the Eurasian civilization, from genetic studies that tie Native Americans to a Siberian homeland (although not to a specific modern Siberian people), to the prevalence of Russian Orthodoxy and language in Alaska (which is actually quite limited). While short on hard evidence of political affinities, Russian media sources suggest that Native Americans and Alaska Natives desire to join the civilizational model of Eurasia, which, while patriarchal, offers protection instead of exploitation. The media coverage suggests an imaginary expansionism of the Eurasian idea, fulfilling Eurasianists' insistence on Russia's destiny of territorial expansion without physically expanding borders through invasion.

The narrative of an organically unified people of the continent of Eurasia resonates with both Indigenous and the majority Russians by conveying a sense of trust and a sense of worth, which political scientist Roger Smith argues are the two necessary ingredients for a successful

political narrative.⁹ The Kremlin's political narrative gives minorities in Russia a promise that their cultures will be protected from the destructive forces of western globalism. The Kremlin conveys a sense of worth through Eurasianism's vision of a larger civilizational project that supersedes their individual cultural uniqueness through the power of working together. Still, empowering narrative is largely realized on paper only. Indigenous peoples in Russia suffer from some of the worst rates in the country of alcoholism, poverty, and political disempowerment in the last decades,¹⁰ as well as ongoing language and cultural loss among Indigenous minorities in Russia.¹¹ The suspension of RAIPON in 2012 was particularly troublesome for Indigenous rights activists--who saw it as an attack on the political standing of Indigenous peoples in Russia--but it was entirely unreported in Kremlin-aligned media. Coverage by more independent and western-funded media was accessible, but lacked depth in outlets such as *Radio Svoboda*, a U.S. State-Department-funded, and independent Russian language news agency. Furthermore, the U.S. Agency for Global Media Funding, through which Russian-language agencies are funded, only in 2016 launched its first television channel in Russia.¹² The Russian language service of the U.S. Agency for Global Media funding continues to see its budget decrease¹³ amid larger-scale cuts to the State Department. More information on the shortcomings of the Russian government

⁹ Roger Smith. *Stories of Peoplehood: the politics and morals of political membership*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 58.

¹⁰ Johannes Rohr. *Indigenous Peoples in the Russian Federation. International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs*. Report 18, 2014. Accessed November 8, 2018. https://www.iwgia.org/images/publications/0695_HumanRights_report_18_Russia.pdf

¹¹ "Vladienie yazikami naseleniem korennykh malochislennykh narodov Rossiyskoi Federatsii." ("Fluency of language of Indigenous, small-numbered people of the Russian Federation,") Russian Census 2010. 2120-2031. Accessed October 26, 2018.

¹² Broadcasting Board of Governors *FY 2019 Congressional Budget Justification*. February 12 2018, 1, Accessed December 1, 2018. https://www.bbg.gov/wp-content/media/2018/02/BBGBudget_FY19_CBJ_2-7-18_Final.pdf

¹³ Broadcasting Board of Governors, *FY 2019*, 56

in its treatment of Indigenous Peoples could pressure the Kremlin to improve political and social conditions for Indigenous peoples.

In a more academic sense, this thesis challenges readers to consider how Russia views its minority peoples differently than the West, which can help elucidate the divergent paths that Indigenous rights have taken in the two hemispheres. Whereas Indigenous peoples in the West are seen as semi-autonomous political entities who forcibly or voluntarily were submitted to the trusteeship of the U.S. federal government, in Russia they are viewed as an integral part of the fabric of society. While placed below ethnic Russians in the hierarchy of peoples, they are nonetheless historically, economically, and spiritually part of Russia's society. While they often suffer from poor social and economic conditions, their sacrifice is seen as a precondition for the future greatness of the Eurasian civilization. This study will thus contribute to the understanding of how governments build stories of nations and peoples in the context of increasing international consciousness of Indigenous people's rights.

Chapter 2: Literature Review on Eurasianism and the Ethnos

2.1 Introduction

Various scholars and advocates have described Eurasianism as a “worldview,” a “movement,” a “philosophy,” a “science,” or a “pseudo-science.” A highly complex ideology that both explains and is explained by geography, politics, cosmology, linguistics, and ethnography has only started to be appreciated by Western Kremlinologists largely only focused on it as a economic alternative to a European and North American focused Atlanticism. Its official beginnings date back to the 1920s in the Russian intellectual emigre community in Sofia, Bulgaria, when Russian academics, exiled by the new Bolshevik government, used their newfound theory as a “repository for their bitterness,” and as a large-scale “therapy,” in the words of Charles Clover,¹⁴ to come to terms with losing the country they loved. Seventy years later, Eurasianism enjoyed a Post-Cold War resurgence during perestroika, when the next generation of Eurasian ideologues faced similar feelings of disruption and loss when the Soviet Union disintegrated. Eurasianism is specific to space as well. Focusing on the continent of Eurasia, it celebrates and explains the complexity of and predicted a great destiny for the supercontinent, while ignoring other geographic areas. In this way, its abstract ideological tenets must be balanced with an appreciation for the specific time and place in which it operates.

Nonetheless, Eurasianism has identifiable ideological underpinnings. Most fundamentally, it posits that the continent of Eurasia plays a special place in the development of civilization, that the Russian people play a special role in uniting the diverse peoples of that continent, and that Eurasia has a special duty to oppose the “West’s” hegemony. It is a “Manifest

¹⁴ Clover, *Black Wind*, 10

Destiny” for Eurasia, but in the context of a continent already explored and colonized and based not on the spirit of the Old Testament, but on foundations of supposedly empirical evidence. Using validated scientific principles of twentieth century structuralism applied to social topics, Eurasianism created a framework with which to understand social processes that Eurasianists believed were universally applicable, but that pointed to an exceptionalism of the historical residents of the Eurasian continent.

But “Eurasianism” as a structure is also hard to define. There is no founding text of Eurasianism to which we can return for clarification or confirmation; instead, proponents advocate for their own versions, using whichever past thinkers best suit their purposes. Indeed, some who are identified as Eurasianists in fact are ambiguous about whether they subscribe to the philosophy, although others may celebrate their writings as such. From the very beginning, thinkers argued over whether the uniting force of Eurasia was geographic, linguistic, or even cosmic and asserted that their understanding was the most up-to-date and scientific. It has thus been a protean ideology--an empty signifier that could easily soak up the vicissitudes of the time. It can be an easy vehicle for racism and nationalism (pejoratives with which it is usually associated in the West), but is egalitarian and inclusive at its core. In any case, internal Russian discussions of Eurasianism’s true nature are far from trivial and are often acrimonious. Nevertheless, scholars have asserted that Eurasianism merits study as a cohesive, if sometimes fought-over, ideology, and one that has become increasingly relevant in recent years.

Despite internal tensions, Eurasianism asserts broad implications for society, and to proponents it functions as a meta-philosophy of sorts. Not only does the ideology contain a specific way of understanding the nature of Eurasian society, it encompasses spirituality,

cosmology, and politics, and contains prescriptive suggestions for geopolitics, economics, and nationalities policies. It also asserts, at least to most proponents, an almost theological naturalness of and inevitability of Eurasia. Russia, the flag-bearer for Eurasia, is destined to become a great power standing in opposition to the “West” to preserve a certain set of (more righteous) values in a sort of Manichean struggle. Some of the arguments may seem contradictory to the close reader, leading some scholars to label it a “pseudo-science,”¹⁵ but adherents in Russia interpret the theory as an established fact. Proponents thus can argue that standing in the way of the inevitable drift of the Eurasianist current runs contrary to Nature, and thus any means are justified to remove the obstacles.

Finally, it should be noted that the goal of this analysis of Eurasianism and neo-Eurasianism has been to elucidate the role of nationalities within the Eurasian/Russian polity and their perceptions of nationalities/ethnicities in the rest of the world, particularly the West. As such, many interesting aspects of Eurasianism have been condensed or omitted in order to focus on Eurasianism’s conception of nationalities and civilizations.

¹⁵ Laruelle, Marlène. *Russian Eurasianism : An Ideology of Empire*. (Washington, D.C. : Woodrow Wilson Center Press: 2008), 10.

Clover, *Black Wind*, 145.

Schmidt, Matthew. “Is Putin Pursuing a Policy of Eurasianism?” *Demokratizatsiya* 13, no. 1 (Winter 2005), 94, accessed September 15 2018. http://demokratizatsiya.pub/archives/13_1_Y35592282447U832.pdf

2.2 Early Eurasianism

2.2.1 Nikolai Trubetskoy

Nikolai Trubetskoy, one of the founders of ur-Eurasianism, was born in 1890 in Moscow to one of the wealthiest aristocratic families in tsarist Russia. He immediately showed a keen intellect, publishing his first academic paper by the time he was fourteen, and at seventeen he began more serious comparative historical-linguistic study of Northern Caucasian and Chukotka-Kamchatka languages. By the time he was twenty-four, Trubetskoy taught linguistics at Moscow University while pursuing the then-novel discipline of phonology. He was developing a revolutionary theory about the nature of language evolution, when his studies were put abruptly on hold by the rattlings of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. He was first forced into the Caucasus, and in 1920 was deported to Bulgaria along with his family, where he struggled to find an outlet for his intellectual energies.

Despite his trouble securing an academic base from which to conduct research and analysis, Trubetskoy's passion for his phonological studies was strong, and he continued to develop his new model of phonological evolution. In letters to his friend and fellow Eurasianist Roman Jakobson, Trubetskoy attacked the idea that languages change only when acted upon by an outside force (i.e. migration from outside, a geographic separation, or political conflict), and instead posited that languages follow a natural progression independent from outside forces. He saw this in his field of phonology, which focused on the relationships among different sounds (phonemes) instead of viewing the phonemes as units in themselves. When a language changes, Trubetskoy suspected, the individual phonemes shift in a certain, predictable direction within each system. Instead of studying the new sounds as individual units in themselves, Trubetskoy

focused on the relationship of the first sound to the second sound--where it was produced in the mouth or its voicing--which could be analyzed itself.¹⁶ The relationship of the sounds thus became the unit of analysis instead of the sound itself. As Clover explains in his study of Eurasianism, language “moves on a completely separate plane of existence from history, changing, spreading, expanding and dying out according to its own internal ‘systemic’ logic.”¹⁷ Like a river flowing towards the sea, languages have directionality, and while they can braid and diverge, they also can merge from separate sources, according to Eurasianism.

While Trubetskoy’s ideas “would revolutionize twentieth century linguistics,”¹⁸ according to Clover, they also led Trubetskoy to ponder the broader consequences this principle might have on societies as a whole. In letters to his friend Roman Jakobson, Trubetskoy speculated on possible applications to other fields of study, such as literature, art, mythology, and culture, each bound by a unique internal organizing system¹⁹ with laws analogous to those he had found in linguistics. Trubetskoy thus endorsed a similar structuralism that social scientists such as Claude Levi-Strauss and Noam Chomsky popularized later in the century. In Trubetskoy’s musings, the history of art, for example, could be seen not as a celebration of the DaVincis and Picassos of history, but as a natural progression of some internal logic towards an equilibrium. Individual actors, in this view of history, dissipate into the larger forces of “natural” progression bound by mathematical laws subject to the system in which they operate. In this sense it was

¹⁶ Clover, *Black Wind*, 45-47.

¹⁷ Clover, *Black Wind*, 46.

¹⁸ Clover, *Black Wind*, 35

¹⁹ Clover, *Black Wind*, 47

similar to the Marxism that was gripping the Soviet Union, though it lacked the economic determinism and replaced it with a culturally based understanding of political entities.

But if all of these fields in global human society were bound by the same “systemic” rules, wouldn’t all differences--linguistic or otherwise--among the diverse peoples eventually be washed away by the equilibrium-seeking forces? Trubetskoy here made an interesting supposition to arrive at the opposite conclusion. Suggesting a sort of geographical determinism, Trubetskoy posited that subtle variations in DNA caused by interactions with landscapes explain how some cultures become distinct while others converge. If a group of people inhabits an organic geographic whole, it will necessarily result in a unique system bound by its own unique systemic rules that will gradually lead to the convergence of underlying cultural attributes. If the groups span unbridgeable geographic barriers--as in the case of the mountainous Caucasuses--the culture can never truly coexist as a cohesive social unit. Therefore, according Trubetskoy, certain Slavic countries such as Poland and the Balkans operated within distinct systemic laws from those of Eurasia.

Trubetskoy saw language as a lens through which to understand how these systems function independently. Drawing on his knowledge of the diverse languages of Russia, Trubetskoy developed an idea of a widespread group spread across the continent, which he called the “Eurasian Language Union,” whose cultural analogue he called the “Eurasian Cultural Conglomerate.”²⁰ Trubetskoy’s work in linguistics with phoneme shifts illustrated his concept of common systemic laws binding the outwardly diverse Eastern Slavic, Turkic, and Finno-Ugric languages of the Eurasian continent and gradually bringing them to a common destiny of

²⁰ Clover, *Black Wind*, 47

grammatical and phonemic parallels. Moreover, by analyzing these rules, Trubetskoy claimed he could determine that the subconscious system of the Eurasian continent “imparts a cultural stability and force to the nation, upholds cultural and historical continuity, and creates the conditions for an economy of the nation’s strength.”²¹

Culturally, Trubetskoy used dance patterns (unlike European folk dancing; Russian folk dances historically lacked a male-female coupling)²², religious etymology (which Trubetskoy identified as having more in common with Proto-Iranian than with Indo European languages)²³, and music (Trubetskoy claimed that Russian folk music until recently used a pentatonic scale borrowed from China)²⁴ to argue for a shared destiny of nations.²⁵ Although he noted several instances of Russian folk culture adopting European cultural characteristics, he tellingly ascribed them not to a shared cultural destiny with Europe, but to prove that European civilization was using its superior technology and economics to upend the natural inclination of the Eurasian civilization.

Importantly, this new idea marked a shift away from the usual nationalism and racism that informed earlier ideologies. One ideological precursor was the Pan-Slavic movement of the nineteenth century, which propounded a uniquely racial conception of a Slavic state that would unite the Slavic people of the Balkans, Belarus, Ukraine, with Russia at the center. Trubetskoy explicitly denounced this view. A civilization is formed not from a common genetic origin, but

²¹ Trubetskoy, quoted and translated by Laruelle *Russian Eurasianism*, 37

²² Nikolai Trubetskoy. “Verkhi i nizhy russkoi kultury” (“Highs and lows of Russian Culture”), in *Iskhod k vostoku. (Turn to the East)*. Sofia, Bulgaria: 1921. Published online at Gumilevica. Accessed September 19, 2018. Translated by author. <http://gumilevica.kulichki.net/TNS/tns09.htm>

²³ Trubetskoy *Verkhi* 1921

²⁴ Trubetskoy *Verkhi* 1921

²⁵ Trubetskoy *Verkhi* 1921

from an essential convergence of cultural and linguistic characteristics, he claimed. “In the Russian educational community, there is a widespread conviction that all of the unique characteristics of this image are ‘Slavic.’ This is incorrect,”²⁶ he wrote in an essay in *Turn to the East*, a collection of Eurasianist essays published in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1921. Instead, the Russian cultural space receives at least as many of its cultural identifiers not through a shared language with the Slavs of the Balkans (not to mention a shared Europeanness), but through its physical connection to the East, particularly with the Turkic people of the Southern border and the Finno-Ugric peoples farther North. Trubetskoy acknowledged some cultural similarities with the Balkans of Eastern Europe, but argued that this is as much a result of the shared influence of Turkey, not a more deep-rooted historic cultural affinity.²⁷ “The Russians, together with the Finno-Ugric peoples and the Volga Turkic peoples make up a unique cultural zone,” he concluded.²⁸

Despite his celebration of the unique cultural contributions of Finno-Ugric, Turkic, and Turanian people, Eurasianists were not calling for movements for self-determination within a Russian imperial system.²⁹ “National liberation movements,” he wrote, “often contain socialism, which always contains elements of cosmopolitanism and internationalism.”³⁰ Trubetskoy’s linguistics showed him scientific proof of the common destinies of the peoples of Eurasia, and any effort to disrupt this natural drift through political movements was an upending of a natural

²⁶ Trubetskoy *Verkhi* 1921

²⁷ Trubetskoy *Verkhi*

²⁸ Trubetskoy *Verkhi*

²⁹ Lasha Tchantouridze. “Eurasianism: In Search of Russia’s Political Identity: A Review Essay.” *Perspectives*, no. 16 (2001): 76. Accessed September 25, 2018 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615879>

³⁰ Quoted in Tchantouridze, *Eurasianism*, 76

order of things, equivalent to suggesting that one should try to stop a river from flowing into the sea. Trubetskoy's Eurasianism represented an inevitable result of systemic laws at work, as well as a justification for imposing those laws.

2.2.2 Peter Savitsky

Petr Savitsky, one of the exiles who published essays in the *Turn to the East* in 1921, shared this view of the special character of the Russia/Eurasia, but he combined with it a more explicit, geological justification of Russia. Also from an aristocratic family, he arrived in Sofia at the same time as Trubetskoy. Savitsky studied geography and soil studies in Saint Petersburg University, which led him to speculate on the nature of the Eurasian polity from a geological standpoint, though he also claimed aesthetic and anthropomorphic justifications for Russia. In his article, "The Geographic and Geopolitical Foundations of Eurasia," Savitsky explained how Russia acts as a bridge between the West and East, calling Russia the "torso" of the Old World. Unlike the rugged coasts and the steep granite aspects of Europe and Southern Asia, Eurasia forms a united geographic symmetry, suggesting that despite its distinct geographic zones, the gradual nature of the change in terrain makes it a more organic whole. "Nowhere," he wrote, "are the transitions between zonal systems more [...] symmetrical than in Russia-Eurasia." Even the chemical composition of the soil provided evidence of the wholeness of Eurasia, he wrote: "the amount of calcium and the percentage of humus symmetrically decline as one moves to both North and South of the black-earth zone," located in the middle of the country.³¹

³¹ Petr Nikolaevich Savitsky. "Geograficheskiye i geopoliticheskiye osnovy evraziistva." ("Geographic and geopolitical foundations of Eurasianism"), in *Iskhod k vostoku (Turn to the East)*. Sofia, Bulgaria: 1921, accessed September 18, 2018. Translation by author. <http://gumilevica.kulichki.net/SPN/spn05.htm>

Because of this geographic unity, Savitsky assumed a natural and pragmatic political unity. Unlike Europe where the “mosaic-fragmented geography promotes the development of isolated, closed-off little worlds,”³² Eurasia’s “nature is not conducive to various forms of separatism.”³³ Savitsky argued that Eurasia’s geographic wholeness, as well as pragmatic economic considerations, contributed to its natural unity. Savitsky pointed out that the peoples in the boreal forest had to rely on produce from farther South, since there was no arable land for thousands of kilometers of forest and that conversely, the people of the Mongolian deserts relied on the people farther North for timber and furs to create a historically integrated economic system. To Savitsky, this “brotherhood of peoples” profoundly shaped Eurasia. “Here there is no opposition between the ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ races”; he writes in *The Geographical and Geopolitical Foundations of Eurasia*, “Here the mutual attraction between races is always greater than the forces of division--here it is easy to awake the ‘will to accomplish a mutual goal.’”³⁴ The diverse peoples needed to submit to the more central, though ill-defined, messianic mission of the Russian Empire.

In addition to the geographic, cultural, and economic unity of the diverse peoples of Eurasia, Savitsky also stressed a spiritual unity, though with a special patriarchal touch. “In the Russian peasant masses, one finds a noticeable sympathetic draw towards the peasant masses of the East, an organic brotherhood between the Orthodox and the nomadic or pariahs of Asia. Russia, in its core is an Orthodox-Muslim and an Orthodox-Buddhist country.”³⁵ The high level

³² Savitsky, *Geograficheskie*

³³ Savitsky, *Geograficheskie*

³⁴ Savitsky, *Geograficheskie*

³⁵ Savitsky, *Geograficheskie*

of spirituality among the Russian peasantry and attraction towards the ritual were evidence of an affinity towards what he perceived as the East. Savitsky viewed Orthodoxy's draw towards the ritualistic and mystical as an influence from the Eastern Civilizations, but was careful always to place Orthodoxy first in the hyphenation.

Savitsky also popularized a geopolitical prescription for the fulfillment of the Eurasianist vision. Using the theories of the British philosopher-geopolitician Halford Mackinder, who posited that global geopolitics had been dominated by "Rimland" states bordering the oceans, while the global "Heartland" lagged far behind economically and politically, Savitsky suggested Russia has a special role in global history. To Savitsky, Russia's geographic positioning, while inconveniently offering minimal ocean access, also reaffirmed its special place in the world's geopolitical balance, since it gave Russia a chance to conceive of a unique identity separate from the "Rimland" powers.³⁶ Savitsky lived through the better part of the twentieth century to see Mackinder's theories manifested during the Cold War, and he planted the seed of Eurasianism's anti-Westernism that would flower in the twenty-first century.

2.2.3 Georgii Florovski

Although he was not especially prominent among the original Eurasian philosophers and left the movement early, Georgii Florovski made some interesting points about the nature of Indigenous Peoples (in his parlance, 'non-historical peoples') that touch on the spirit of Eurasianism. In his essay "*On non-historical people*," Florovski divided the different cultures into 'historical peoples'--those responsible for the bulk of the events of world history, and the 'non-historical peoples'--those who were overlooked in world history and/or were new to it.

³⁶Tchantouridze, *Eurasianism*, 76.

Florovski emphasized the prevalence of non-historical people in Russia, whom he foresaw as overtaking the staid, aging historical cultures, of whom, he wrote in 1921 “all strength is expended on their grandfathers’ riches and the upkeep of the museum’s treasures.”³⁷ It was the “young,” “non-historical” peoples, then, who would inevitably leap over the progress of the “historical” people in order to complete what Florovski called the “only ‘law’ of life: that the young should always push out the old.”³⁸ Florovski implied that the ethnic Russian people are young, at least compared to the cultures of Europe, but that an even greater power in the future will be the “non-historical” people of Siberia and the Russian North. These groups thus play a vital role in the future of the Russian civilization on a global scale, in his vision.

Florovski was also keen to emphasize the role that non-ethnic Russians had played in the formation of the Russian identity, a novel concept at the time of rising nationalism,^{39,40} and ties this in with the idea of the “young,” rising peoples of Siberia. Florovski suggested that societies and nations are essentially larger scale embodiments of individuals, and that their youthful vigor will inevitably and viciously overtake the aging elders. The article implies that Russia has both an altruistic and a pragmatic duty to protect these “non-historical” peoples and integrate them into the larger civilization so that when their time comes, the entire entity will rise. If the Russian nation could succeed in protecting its minorities, the minorities would become the drivers of the next era of historical action. Interestingly, Florovski also included the peoples of Far Western

³⁷ Georgii Florovski “O narodakh ne-istoricheskikh” (“On non-historical peoples”), in *Iskhod k Vostoku (Turn to the East)*. Sofia, Bulgaria: 1921, accessed September 18, 2018. <http://gumilevica.kulichki.net/SPN/spn05.htm>

³⁸ Florovski, *O narodakh*.

³⁹ Tchantouridze notes that this multi-ethnic character is in fact historically correct of Russia, where leaders and visionaries of different nationalities had played a large role in the historical narrative, though he points out that Florovsky ignores the role that European figures had in this development

⁴⁰ Tchantouridze, *Eurasianism*, 75-76

America--apparently the Western frontiersmen, though he did not elaborate--who had freed themselves of the grasp of Romano-German culture that to Florovski embodied the old and rotten world of Europe. While this idea can be seen to vindicate the American project, it does not preclude antagonism between the rising fortunes of the “non-historical” peoples--Americans and Russians. Later, Eurasianists would expand on these antagonisms between the West and the East, which they would see as equally powerful in an archetypical clash of civilizations. Florovski’s focus on “non-historical” peoples established the importance of Indigenous Peoples within the Russian polity within the Eurasianist paradigm.

2.2.4 Analysis of Early Eurasianism

Because scholars, particularly Laruelle, have emphasized the discontinuity between the original and post-Soviet Eurasianists (whom she calls the “Neo-Eurasianists”), it is important to appreciate the significance of the original Eurasianists. Their ideas proved, at least to some extent to be true, as Tchantouridze and Clover argue. These early theoreticians correctly predicted the rise of America as a superpower, the rise of Russia (despite their misgivings about the Soviet Union), and the ultimate incompatibility between the atheistic Soviet Union and the essentially spiritual Orthodox Russians.⁴¹ The realization of their predictions surely confirmed to later Eurasianists the righteousness of their path, as well as a feeling of the inevitability of an even greater Russia, now that it had shaken the strict ideological yoke of the Soviet Union and could return to its essential, organic nature. Moreover, early Eurasianists established a rigorous scholarly groundwork for a philosophy that would later be used to justify Eurasian mythology and occultism, lending it an air of academic credence.

⁴¹ Tchantouridze *Eurasianism*, 78, and Clover, *Black Wind*, 29

More ideologically, the original Eurasianists were the first to break the strict ethnic or racially prescriptive form of the Eurasian polity that earlier Pan-Slavists propounded. Instead of insistence on a Pan-Slavic brotherhood that would include the Balkans, Belarus, and Poland, among others, the Eurasian definition absorbed the Finno-Ugric and Turkic peoples of the Eurasian continent, celebrating their unique national characteristics and contributions to the history and future of Russia. Florovski's inclusion of "non-historical" peoples in his writing further emphasized the diversity of cultures and their development within Russia. Although these writers always placed Russians as a binding force within this polity, the new idea was progressive in theory and was explicitly created to stand against the colonial nature of Europe at the time, which they saw as violently conquering non-dominant cultures in a Darwinian struggle. The early Eurasianists, although less prone than today's neo-Eurasianists to cheap jabs at the West, laid the groundwork for subsequent re-interpretations that emphasized a global struggle between holiness and godlessness on a global stage. During Russia's twenty-first century rebranding, it drew on Eurasianism to claim a holy calling juxtaposed with the West's godlessness.

2.3 The bridge Eurasianist: Lev Gumilev

Lev Gumilev, the son of the celebrated poet Anna Akhmatova, was not particularly fond of calling himself a Eurasianist, but a new generation of Russians view his ideas as the foremost academic vindication of the current Eurasianist movement. Gumilev's popularization of the terms *ethnos*, *superethnos* and *passionarnost*, among others, have been adopted into mainstream political and academic discourse, while Russians and residents of other former Soviet republics

celebrate his image. Gumilev, according to Marlene Laruelle of the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, “occupies a colossal place in school and university textbooks” in Russia as well as in autonomous regions of the Russian Federation and former Soviet Republics, and his ideas are seen as above reproach and in themselves the justification for research institutes and scientific articles.⁴² His elevated status puzzles Westerners, but the historical environment in which he lived explains much.

Born in 1912 to famous parents, Lev ran crossed the Soviet regime in 1937 when he approved of a subversive poem and was torn away from a heartbroken mother and sentenced to ten years of hard labor in Siberia. While Akhmatova mourned her lost son in one of her most famous poems ‘Requiem,’ Gumilev was laying the foundations for a new paradigm in thinking about cultures as he observed his fellow inmates interact in the Spartan conditions of the Siberian North, deprived of any comforts and short on food. Despite the Darwinian conditions in the camp, he noticed that his fellow convicts, instead of reverting to self-interested greediness, formed into bands of just four or five men, whose members seemed willing to give their last crust of bread to failing comrades even when it diminished their own slim chances of survival. The willingness for self-sacrifice struck Gumilev, who saw that the more each band was willing to sacrifice for one another, the more likely it was to survive the harsh winter. In fact, it was not the individual who was fighting for Darwinian survival but the band of prisoners who had formed naturally without kinship or racial ties and without direction from above. In principal, he reasoned, this illustrated the same bonding impulses that larger societies exhibited.

⁴² Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism*, 50-55

Gumilev wondered what made certain societies, like the Macedonians under Alexander the Great, set out to conquer most of the known world, when clearly they could not hold that territory—and they had no incentive to suffer such hardships for relatively little reward. Gumilev’s “eureka” moment came when he realized there must be some internal impulse motivating certain people—like Alexander the Great—to sacrifice their beings in the name of a higher cause, namely “posthumous honor.”⁴³ He gave this impulse a name, *passionarnost*, which is usually translated in English as *passionarity*, a word that would later acquire “dog whistle” status under the Putin regime.⁴⁴ To Gumilev, the key to understanding the rise and fall of civilizations was to understand that they arose when a high amount of *passionarity* was concentrated in one single band, igniting the impulse for self-sacrifice as a means of achieving eternal recognition, as Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan had done. From this idea Gumilev began to analyze the history of the peoples of the Eurasian steppe, on whom he had focused previous academic research, and—in a rather reflexive argument—justified the existence of the Russian/Soviet state, essentially arguing that *we are great because we are destined for greatness, and we are destined for greatness because we are great.*

Without initially knowing it, he had stumbled into the paradigm of Savitsky and Trubetskoy, with whom he could not communicate due to his imprisonment. It was not until 1957, after Gumilev had been somewhat politically rehabilitated and was working in the library of the Hermitage in Leningrad, that he met Savitsky who introduced him to Eurasianism (though Laruelle claims that Gumilev had discovered some of the theories through a former professor at

⁴³ Clover, *Black Wind*, 94

⁴⁴ Clover, *Black Wind*, 94

university in the 1930s).⁴⁵ Savitsky had been impressed with a Gumilev article from 1949 in which he found an inherent “Eurasianism” in Gumilev’s celebration of the Mongol and Turkic people. According to Clover, Gumilev “eagerly adopted virtually all of the old Eurasianist’s views,” possibly in order to compensate for psychological trauma caused in the prison camps.⁴⁶ His writings, which until then had been politically neutral, began to take on distinctly anti-Western views.

In 1970, Gumilev submitted perhaps his most influential piece in his dissertation, *Ethnogenesis and the Human Biosphere*, which would create a new lexicon for Russia to discuss states and people. Disregarding previous conceptions of “ethnicities” and “races” so prevalent in Europe, Gumilev instead proposed the term *ethnos*, which, though occurring naturally and bound by a uniting force of energy, lacked any sort of racial basis, just as he had seen with his fellow prisoners in the Gulag. Previous Soviet scholars had suggested that *ethnos* was wired into genetics, or that the concept was entirely socially constructed, with no basis in reality. Gumilev essentially split the difference between the two, arguing that although *ethnos* was a naturally occurring, inescapable, and essential part of one’s identity (i.e. you could not join another *ethnos*), it was determined by behavioral conformism in the early stages of one’s life.⁴⁷

He also rejected the Soviet idea of *ethnos* as a people bound with some uniting characteristic--language, genetics, or a cultural tradition--and instead emphasized the relationships of people within the *ethnos* to one another, and their dialectic development with the

⁴⁵ Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism*, 57

⁴⁶ Clover, *Black Wind*, 115

⁴⁷ Alexander Sergeevich Titov. “Lev Gumilev, Ethnogenesis, and Eurasianism.” (PhD dissertation, University College, London, 2005). Accessed September 19, 2018. 59-62.
<http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1446515/1/U602440.pdf>

natural environment around them.⁴⁸ In *Ethnogenesis*, Gumilev sought to explain how such an *ethnos* can form and develop, theorizing that when put into contact through a shared geographic landscape--as was the case with the Eurasian landmass, or in his Siberian Gulag--a group naturally forms bonds of fraternity and is willing to sacrifice for the other. The only difference between the micro and macro examples were the units of collectivization: in the Gulag the units were individuals, while in Eurasia, the units were different peoples. Correspondingly, he gave the terms *ethnos* and *superethnos*. In both, bonds formed not as a result of ethnicity or race but as a consequence of the unique geographic conditions of a space, forming a unique “rhythm” of shared history and destiny.⁴⁹ They were in this sense the real units of the social sciences, akin to an individual in Western thought, with immutable bonds that could only be broken through dying. Gumilev also posited a *sub-ethnos*, which corresponded to smaller groups who shared manners and traditions, such as the Old Believers, the Cossacks, and presumably the Small-Numbered People of the North, though he did not name them specifically. He did, however, assert that the more *subethnoi*, the stronger the *superethnoi* would be.⁵⁰

Gumilev’s argument explained Russia’s greatness and its destiny to endure. Given an injection of *passionarity* at founding, he posited that a *superethnos* would expand until its psychological energy was exhausted in its lifespan of approximately 1,200 years. The basis for the creation of these bonds was a burst of cosmic energy, a proposition that would earn Gumilev the scorn of colleagues and undermine his legitimacy as a scientist to Western researchers. Gumilev traced the founding of the Russian/Eurasian *ethnos* to Russia’s battle with the Mongol

⁴⁸ Titov, *Lev Gumilev*, 62-63.

⁴⁹ Clover, *Black Wind*, 135

⁵⁰ Titov, *Lev Gumilev*, 71

horde at Kulikovo in 1380, which he reinterprets as a civil war of the Mongols in which the Russians joined the victorious side. Of course, this conveniently placed Russia at the height of its 1,200-year lifespan during the twenty-first century.⁵¹

Although the word *ethnos* had arisen in the Soviet Union before his dissertation, Gumilev's work made the word ubiquitous during the 1980s and 1990s as the Soviet Union fell apart. Even though his dissertation was officially attacked in the press and banned from publication, his monograph, after having been deposited in the Institute for Scientific and Technical Information, became the most requested in the Soviet Union before it was published in 1989,⁵² despite the fact that his theory flouted the orthodox Marxist view of the progression of people.⁵³ Gumilev's ideology, as many have noted, "seems to have grown in direct proportion to the waning appeal of communism,"⁵⁴ which ironically coincided with the ultimate refutation of the veracity of his arguments, as republic after republic declared independence.

Gumilev's importance to our purposes are twofold: his popularization of the Eurasianist idea of a unified continental civilization, and his consolidation of a lexicon for their expression in public discourse. As mentioned above, Gumilev's ideas were widely requested by academic journals, and began to take the place of the rigid Marxist ideology in the waning days of the Soviet Union. In the 1980s, as the Soviet Union began to disintegrate with centrifugal forces of nationalism, Gumilev's theories offered a "scientific" justification for the polity's continued

⁵¹ Clover, *Black Wind*, 139

⁵² Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism*, 54

⁵³ Delineated in Stalin's 1936 Constitution of the three separate stages of peoplehood--progressing from a "tribe" to a "people" and finally to the status of "nation," before being dissolved by a recognition of the worldwide unity of social classes.

⁵⁴ Clover, *Black Wind*, 141

existence as a cohesive unit. As republics began to declare independence, Gumilev began to appear on TV programs extolling the virtues of the multi-ethnic Soviet Union, and he became “one of the heroes of perestroika”⁵⁵ as patriotic citizens grasped for reasons to preserve the status quo. It was a bitter irony for Gumilev that as his ideas gained wide acceptance, the polity his theories justified was crumbling. Nonetheless, today the publics of Russia and the former Soviet Republics widely revere him, particularly in Kazakhstan, where President Nursultan Nazarbaev (who also pursued a project aimed at the economic integration of Eurasia) named the country’s main university after Gumilev, as well as in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, nationalists adopted the vocabulary Gumilev had championed, and the rest of the population followed suit; the terms *ethnos* and *passionarity* remain in wide use today. The terms were “absorbed into the political mainstream and his theories today stand at the nexus of politics and power”⁵⁷ used by professors and the president Putin, whose use of the term *passionarity* in 2012 signaled to many Russia’s willingness to pursue a more aggressive, expansionist foreign policy.⁵⁸ Gumilev’s scholarship, at least to adherents, defined the nature of a people, establishing them as more concrete entities in contrast to the European view, which saw the individual as atomized unit of a society.⁵⁹ As a prominent personality in public discourse until his death in 1991, Gumilev inspired a new group of intellectuals in the new post-Soviet Union who treated his ideas not just as science but as a quasi-prophetic groundwork for twenty-first century worldview.

⁵⁵ Clover, *Black Wind*, 144

⁵⁶ Clover, *Black Wind*, 145

⁵⁷ Clover, *Black Wind*, 145

⁵⁸ Clover, *Black Wind*, 2

⁵⁹ Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism*, 62

2.4 Neo-Eurasianism

The new ideology would come to be called “Neo-Eurasianism,” and, though it follows a rather tenuous line from the founders, it nonetheless shares the supposition that Eurasia is and must be a united *ethnos* that has a special mission in the history of civilization. To these original tenets, Neo-Eurasianism would fuel anti-Western Manichaeism, and bring in specific geopolitical prescriptions, while shoring up its influence over the ruling elite, particularly in the foreign policy realm. The two most influential and prominent proponents of Neo-Eurasianism are Aleksandr Dugin and Aleksandr Panarin. Dugin is the more public figure, cultivating an image of a mystical advisor and scholar with shrewd geopolitical acumen and an ostentatious commitment to Orthodoxy. Nonetheless, his writings are widely cited in foreign policy circles, where he has cultivated solid relationships with people in power. Panarin, meanwhile, is less charismatic, but his anti-Western views seem to have been adopted widely by politicians keen to establish a new national ideology.

2.4.1 Aleksandr Dugin

Born into a Moscow military family in 1962, Dugin rose to prominence in the capital’s intellectual scene publishing translations of European works in right-wing journals. Clearly influenced by the *Nouvelle Droite* or “New Right” in Europe, which sought to recast Nazi and fascist ideas in a non-racial context, Dugin personally befriended Alain de Benoist, the Frenchman most identified with the movement. The New Right, while maintaining historical and intellectual ties to fascism, rejected ethnic based-definitions of nation-states that they believed to be a dead end, and instead proposed a radical, reactionary vision of the future of political

organization: the empire.⁶⁰ The empire, as they saw it, would be ethnically heterogeneous, but united by a commitment to a common cause, a “vehicle for an idea, a project, a principle,” and led by an authoritarian leader whose vision transcended the whims of the individual nations.⁶¹ In the late nineties, Dugin arranged a roundtable between De Benoist and senior Russian military figures, after Dugin met him while traveling in Europe,⁶² and later co-opted (and distorted) many of De Benoist’s arguments.⁶³ One can note the similar visions of De Benoist and his vision for multi-ethnic, imperial projects, united by a certain, almost intangible reason, and the earlier Eurasianists, who had the same pseudo-imperial ambitions, but from the perspective of the Eurasian heartland.

Without a doubt, Dugin’s most influential work has been his book *The Foundations of Geopolitics* (hereafter referred to simply as *Foundations*), a sprawling treatise published with the (disputed)⁶⁴ patronage of a prominent military figure, that reads sometimes like a textbook and sometimes like a manifesto. Adopting Mackinder’s *Heartland vs. Rimland* dichotomy (which Savitsky also used, although evidently Dugin had not read the early Eurasianists)⁶⁵, Dugin more explicitly prescribes actions to be taken to make Eurasia a manifest entity, liberally using overlaid arcane cartograms and symbolism to prove his points.⁶⁶ Dugin emphasizes the

⁶⁰ Clover, *Black Wind*, 177

⁶¹ Clover, *Black Wind*, 177

⁶² Alan Ingram. “Alexander Dugin: Geopolitics and neo-fascism in post-soviet Russia.” *Political Geography* 20 (2001): 1031. Accessed September 25, 2018. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962-6298\(01\)00043-](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962-6298(01)00043-9)

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⁶³ Clover, *Black Wind*, 176

⁶⁴ Clover, *Black Wind*, 236

⁶⁵ Clover, *Black Wind*, 179

⁶⁶ Anton Shekhovtsov. “The palingenetic thrust of Russian neo-urasianism: Ideas of rebirth in Aleksandr Dugin’s worldview.” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9 (2008): 491. Accessed September 25, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14690760802436142>

“ceaseless duel of civilizations” between the economically advanced powers of the United States and Britain on the one hand, and the more spiritually advanced heartland of Eurasia on the other. While he bases his arguments on Nazi philosopher Carl Schmitt, Dugin’s arguments echo the Eurasianists’ supposition of the naturalness of Eurasia, led by the Russian *ethnos*, and the Eurasian *superethnos*, that has a cosmic role in opposing the West.

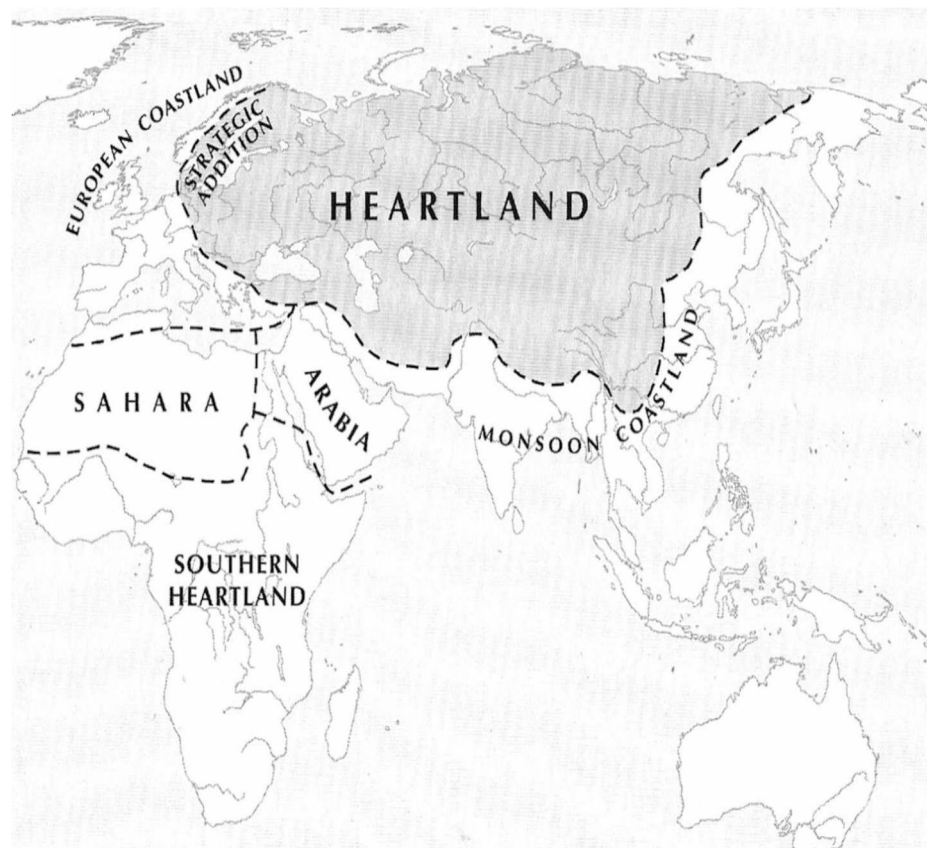


Figure 2.1: Map of civilizational zones including “Strategic addition,” of Baltics, Finland, Ukraine, and Belarus.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Aleksandr Dugin. *Foundations of Geopolitics*. Ebook. Chapter 2. Moscow: Arctogaia Center, 1997. Accessed September 21, 2018. <https://www.geopolitica.ru/bind/geopolitika>

In *Foundations*, Dugin more explicitly develops the opposition between the avaricious West, to whom money is the ultimate measure of success, and Eurasia, to whom *territory* is most important. Dugin relates this to the essential nature of Russia's geography, which, unlike the West with its sea-based international trading economy that values opening new markets for economic exploitation, is based on internally focused cultural and spiritual development. As Alan Ingram explains, "space in [Dugin's] geopolitics is analogous to money in liberal economics."⁶⁸ Because of simple geopolitical misguidance, especially during the Soviet project, Russia/Eurasia had failed to live up to its true potential. Dugin therefore calls for a unification of not only the people of the former Soviet space but also of the entire bloc of "Anti-Atlanticist" countries whose strategic command would be centered in Moscow. Delineating the axis of power between Moscow, Tokyo and Berlin that would stand together against Western power, Dugin turns his archetypal vision of civilizations into tangible, geopolitical prescriptions that he advances throughout the text. Dugin continuously emphasizes the duality of his vision, claiming oppositions between Earth and Water, Space and Time, Tradition and Modernity, and Traditional Religion and Antichrist, all embodied by Russia on one hand and the U.S. on the other.⁶⁹ In this sense, Dugin combines the mythical with the pragmatic in a way that emphasizes an inevitable expansionism in Russian foreign policy.

⁶⁸ Ingram, *Aleksandr Dugin*, 1034

⁶⁹ Ingram, *Aleksandr Dugin*, 1034

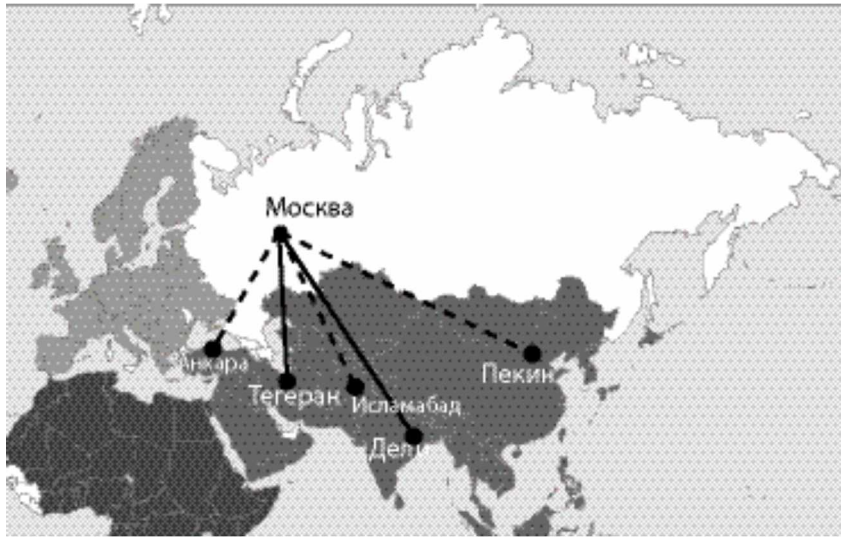


Figure 2.2: Axis between Moscow, Ankara, Tehran, Islamabad, Deli, and Beijing.⁷⁰

Although he rarely writes about Indigenous Peoples, comments to news media shed light on some of Dugin's views. In 2008, a few years after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine that had led to a pro-Western government, Russian news media began reporting on increasing nationalism and fascism within the government, particularly in the western Ukrainian city of Kiev. Media reports suggested that the Kievan government was intent on denying the rights of ethnic Tatars as well as Russians, both of whom were concentrated in Eastern Ukraine close to the border with Russia. During this time, Dugin was interviewed as a quasi-political representative, as he asserted a sort of super-governmental authority to protect the Tatars whose rights ostensibly were being violated in Ukraine.

I met earlier with the leaders of the Crimean Tatars who are living now in Turkey, and they told me that the Ukrainian government is creating the most unfavorable conditions for the preservation of the Crimean-Tatar ethnos, and asked me the question of whether

⁷⁰ Dugin, *Foundations*, Chapter 4.

Russia could step in and guarantee their existence. Therefore the pro-Russian tendency among the Crimean Tatars is very serious.⁷¹

Dugin's remarks display a patriarchal attitude towards the "small numbered peoples," particularly those of Turkic blood, whom Gumilev was earlier fond of writing about. In Dugin's and Gumilev's vision, Russia stands as the military and cultural protector of the smaller ethnic groups of Eurasia. Russia's ability to do so is only threatened by the cunning and manipulative West, which Dugin argues leverages its economic superiority to attract feeble-minded peripheral countries, despite their natural affinity for Russia. Should the West be allowed to win this fight, its essential exploitative nature will then destroy any traces of national distinctiveness through a physical or cultural genocide, he warns.⁷² Through the Annexation of 2014, the media continued to interview Dugin as an expert on the Ukraine situation that, ironically, also led to reports of human rights abuses against the Crimean Tatars perpetrated by the new, pro-Moscow government.⁷³ Dugin repeatedly claimed in interviews that Ukraine historically had no standing as a country. This contention echoed his decades-old argument from *Foundations*: "She [Ukraine] doesn't have any cultural uniqueness of universal meaning, no geographical uniqueness, nor ethnic exclusivity."⁷⁴ During the crisis in 2014 in an apparent attempt to disseminate his ideology abroad, he repeated the claim in an open letter to the people of the

⁷¹ Alexander Dugin. 2014. "Sud'ba vseh narodov v Krymu, kak krymskikh tatar, tak i russkikh, nakhoditsya pod ugrozoi" ("The Fate of all of the people of Crimea, Crimean Tatars as well as Russians, is under threat") *News Agency: "Crimean News"* September 19, 2008. Accessed September 19, 2018. <http://qha.com.ua/ru/politika/aleksandr-dugin-quot-sudba-vseh-narodov-v-krimu-kak-krimskih-tatar-tak-i-russkih-nahoditsya-pod-ugrozoi/21650>

⁷² This Eurasianist inspired fear of genocide helps explain why the ruse of a "genocide against ethnic Russians in Ukraine" was so effective in inspiring patriotism and approval of Putin's actions in taking Crimea in 2014.

⁷³ Samuel Osborne. *UN Accuses Russia of Multiple Human Rights Abuses in Crimea*. Independent. November 16, 2016. Accessed September 20, 2018. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-crimea-putin-human-rights-abuses-un-accusations-claims-a7421406.html>

⁷⁴ Dugin, *Foundations*, Chapter 5.1.

United States published on the American right wing pundit Alex Jones' *Infowars* website and in other locations.⁷⁵

Revealing the imperial nature of his vision, Dugin's view of Ukraine's purposelessness as a state lies in the fact that it masquerades as a homogenous nation state based on an ethnic idea of Ukraine, despite the fact various peoples Indigenous to the region live there. Dugin attributes Ukraine's existence to the European nation-state model, which espouses a celebration of only the dominant ethnic group, while oppressing minority groups for the ultimate goal of economic exploitation. Whereas the Western-oriented Ukraine oppresses its small-numbered peoples culturally and politically, Dugin suggests that they see a path to self-empowerment through the Russian state and its imperial structure. Tatars, in Dugin's view, could become integrated into the Russian empire as natural aspirants towards a great Eurasian civilization, while they would eventually be annihilated by the Western-oriented Ukraine.

While it is impossible to quantify Dugin's influence, his reach appears to be wide. While he does not wield an official position in the current Russian government, many scholars view his influence as profound. Clover, an adherent of this view, writes that after Dugin's publication of *Foundations*, his ideas "would revolutionize Russian politics over the next two decades,"⁷⁶ and that his vocabulary, though "watered-down," had infiltrated throughout the Russian ruling class.⁷⁷ His cultivated air of mystique combined with understanding of policy and influence on the elite have led Sean MacCormac, writing for the Center for Security Policy to dub him

⁷⁵ Aleksandr Dugin "Letter to the American People." *Infowars*, April 27, 2014. Accessed September 19, 2018. <https://www.infowars.com/letter-to-the-american-people-on-ukraine/>

⁷⁶ Clover, *Black Wind*, 174

⁷⁷ Clover, *Black Wind*, 296

“Putin’s Rasputin”; MacCormac claims he has “been extremely influential in the Russian military and foreign policy establishment.”⁷⁸ *Foundations*, Dugin’s opus, has been used as a primer in top-level military academies in Russia, and the former speaker of the Duma called for his works to be included in the national school curriculum.⁷⁹ Dugin himself, in a 2007 interview, was even more self-aggrandizing, declaring that “My thought prevails, my discourse reigns.”⁸⁰ While some have doubted his actual influence on the philosophical discourse, arguing that politicians may see his affiliations with occultism as too risky to publicly endorse, for instance Neumann and Laruelle, few have questioned his impact as a pundit. Neumann claims his main influence lies in his unification of the various threads of irredentist nationalism, and that his biography reads like a who’s who of radical right figures.⁸¹ He clearly stands as a figurehead for a movement that slowly has been chipping away at the Atlanticist foothold in public discourse. Neumann, writing in 2014, claims that Atlanticism has become a “marginalized view” in the public debate,⁸² a claim echoed by Mikheyeva.⁸³

An interesting and understudied facet of Dugin’s legacy is his driving commitment to establishing institutions oriented towards longer term influence. Even among Eurasianists, Dugin seems uniquely committed to institutionalizing his long-term vision of the Eurasianist project,

⁷⁸ Sean MacCormac, “Aleksandr Dugin: Putin’s Rasputin?” *Center for Security Policy*, April 27, 2015. Accessed September 19, 2018.

<https://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/2015/03/04/aleksandr-dugin-putins-rasputin/>

⁷⁹ Schmidt, *Is Putin pursuing*, 91

⁸⁰ Clover, *Black Wind*, 296

⁸¹ Iver B. Neumann “Russia’s Europe, 1991–2016: Inferiority to Superiority.” *International Affairs* 92, no. 6 (2016): 1381-1399. Accessed December 3, 2018. doi:10.1111/1468-2346.12752.

⁸² Neumann, *Russia’s Europe*, 1396

⁸³ Irina Mikheyeva. ““Konservativnye isledovaniya v politicheskom i intellektual’nom pole sovremennoi Rossii.” (“Conservative Studies” in the political and intellectual fields in modern Russia”) *Palatochnii Sphere*, no. 15 (2): 125. Accessed September 5, 2018.

having established his own publishing house, *Arctogaia*, which produces Russian translations of New Right and fascist thinkers. He also founded the Eurasian Youth Movement, which was especially active in Ukraine and Turkey, and founded the Center for Conservative Studies at the prominent Lomonosov State University in Moscow. Although he was dismissed from his position at Lomonosov in 2014 (for a polemic against the Ukrainian people), his Center for Conservative Studies remains, dedicated to “the development and establishment of conservative ideology in academics.”⁸⁴ Mikheyeva, a Russian scholar, sees a larger pattern of the consolidation and institutionalization of right wing ideologies which, “previously regarded as latent, marginal and informal, take advantage of their new status and lay claim to the development of state strategic political programs.”⁸⁵ Although professors at the Center for Conservative Studies do not hold government positions, the elite “defers to the ideas suggested by the leaders of the Center” and “transmits the most radical version of its foreign policy through them.”⁸⁶ Most scholars seem to agree that there has been an undeniable rightward shift in the public discourse, so much so that even pro-Western Atlanticists have been influenced by Dugin’s imperial conceptions of Russia,⁸⁷ especially foreign policy elite, regardless of political leanings.⁸⁸ In any case, this institutionalization of Eurasianism, which the original Eurasianists were never able to achieve, has the ability to affect policy well into the future.

⁸⁴ Center for Conservative Studies. “About” Accessed 9/19/2018. konservatism.org/about

⁸⁵ Mikheyeva, *Konservativnye isledovaniya*, 125.

⁸⁶ Mikheyeva, *Konservativnye isledovaniya*, 86

⁸⁷ Dmitry V. Shlapentokh, “Eurasianism: Past and Present.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, no. 2: 384

⁸⁸ Shlapentokh, *Eurasianism*, 394

2.4.2 Aleksandr Panarin

Alexander Panarin, the other of the “Two Faces of Contemporary Eurasianism”⁸⁹ alongside Dugin, is the more bookish and more philosophical theoretician of Neo-Eurasianism. Born in 1940, he holds a teaching position in political science at Lomonosov State University and has published several influential books on the Eurasian mission. He is a strong advocate of the differentiation between the West and Eurasia, and a staunch and biting critic of the West. This critique has brought his ideas to prominence in the public discourse. As Laruelle explains “the founding postulate of Panarin’s Eurasianism is a condemnation of the West,”⁹⁰ and Panarin has presented this view more clarity and nuance than most.

“The problems of modernity,” writes Panarin in the introduction to his most famous work, *Orthodox Civilization in the Globalized World*, “lie in the West’s nihilistic-destructive relationships to nature, culture, and morality.”⁹¹ To Panarin, Europe and the United States’ influence--and threat--is like a parasite insidiously infecting non-dominant cultures from within to cause the gradual eradication of their national identity as it seeks to unite the world in universal commitment to “one-dimensional” liberal democracy, which Panarin sees as essentially capitalistic, money-grubbing, and racist, since their elevation of individuals over groups necessarily will stamp out any minority cultures.⁹² “‘Free and open society’ as the West interprets it really means open Social Darwinism,” he writes, “in which the weak cultures,

⁸⁹ Marlène Laruelle. “The Two Faces of Contemporary Eurasianism: An Imperial Version of Russian Nationalism.” *Nationalities Papers* 32, no. 1 (March 2004): 115–36. Accessed September 25, 2018. doi:10.1080/0090599042000186197.2004

⁹⁰ Laruelle, *Two Faces*, 120

⁹¹ Alexander Panarin. *Pravoslavnyaya tsivilizatsiya v globalnom mirye. (Orthodox Civilization in a Global World)*. Moscow: Eksmo, 2002. 59. Accessed October 13, 2018. http://rusinst.ru/docs/books/A.S.Panarin-Pravoslavnyaya_tsivilizatsiya.pdf

⁹² Panarin, *Pravoslavnyaya tsivilizatsiya*, 67

economies and *ethnoi* are doomed to die, giving up the plane to the strong.”⁹³ Europe’s success, he writes, is “based on enslaving the rest of the world. Europe stands for a democratic racism”⁹⁴ in the sense that it only empowers the view of the majority. This attack on the “moral health”⁹⁵ of non-European civilizations can only be stopped through fighting the cultural hegemony of Europe over Russia, which, he argues, should close itself off to Europe’s influence to allow its own culture to develop and flourish in a way that celebrates the diversity of the Eurasian *superethnos*. Russia/Eurasia can then organically develop its own spiritual fortitude and become the antipode of the West.

Panarin pays special attention to the West’s treatment of minority cultures. As mentioned above, Panarin views Europe and the U.S. as essentially extinguishing the diverse peoples of the world in a cultural genocide that will result in a worldwide universalism centered on a commitment to economic freedom. Whereas Russia’s commitment to a traditional and spiritual society is inclusive, the West’s model rests on survival-of-the-fittest philosophy. The U.S., which inhabits a territory formerly occupied by multitudinous and diverse peoples, did not practice genocide of its Indigenous Peoples merely to gain territory as it colonized the West; it continues to practice a cultural genocide against them that will snuff out any ethnic identity. It would be the natural inclination of Indigenous Peoples to fight for recognition of their collective identity, but because they are victims of the West’s “social Darwinism” they are unable to.

Panarin further criticizes the European idea of a “nation-state” and ethnic nationalism, which he sees as empowering separatists who fight the natural order in their effort to fragment

⁹³ Panarin, *Pravoslavnyaya tsivilizatsiya*, 62

⁹⁴ Quoted in Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism*, 89

⁹⁵ Laruelle, *Two Faces*, 120

organic civilizations such as Eurasia. To Panarin, Europe's ethnic nationalism results from an insistence on individual rights over what he sees as the "pre-eminence of collective identity"⁹⁶ that naturally occurs in Eurasia. Europe ignores the rights of the collective identity while privileging the individual identity; Eurasia must do the opposite and empower the collective identity (Gumilev's *ethnos*), sometimes at the cost of individual rights or freedoms. This point is essential to understanding how Eurasianism might be applied to Russia's conception of its Indigenous Peoples. While Eurasianism does not necessarily strip individuals of their rights, it subordinates their individual rights to those of their *ethnos*, which it subjects to the will of the *superethnos* of Eurasia. Thus, a reindeer herder's being stripped of his grazing rights does not constitute a human tragedy that requires compensation and rectification--it is an inevitable misfortune that is the cost of the collective's advancement towards a united, biologically-based civilizational mission. The *ethnoi* thus takes place within the citizenry as the locus of civilization, while the individual is made significant only as a part of the *ethnos*.

In line with other Eurasianists, Panarin views empire as the ideal form of government. As Laruelle explains, the empire in Panarin's view "promotes awareness of civilizations in a world divided along regional and ethnic lines and provides an ideology of order against the chaos of the modern world."⁹⁷ Panarin seems to have predicted the resurgence of tribalism and nationalist ideologies that have sprung up in Europe and the U.S. in recent years and offered an alternative form of government, based on an authoritarian center that unites a people who "do not have any other basis for a set of universal norms and a legal order,"⁹⁸ by instilling a common idea. The

⁹⁶ Laruelle, *Two Faces*, 122

⁹⁷ Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism*, 97

⁹⁸ Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism*, 97

uniting idea of the Eurasian empire is a high value of spirituality and a “renewal of asceticism and repentance in the industrial world,”⁹⁹ an idea that Russia’s 2015 National Security Concept adopted almost verbatim. The National Security Concept adopts Panarin’s position that Russia’s telos is not to become a wealthy economic powerhouse like the United States, but rather to develop its essential spirituality and become a beacon to other countries worldwide. Panarin also emphasizes Russia’s inclusivity, noting that the Russian state, even at its Muscovite founding, was not an “ethnocentric” state but a multi-ethnic one whose natural inclusivity was centered on the idea of a kingdom of heaven in a secular Orthodoxy.¹⁰⁰

2.5 Analysis of Eurasianism

Eurasianism is hard to pin down. If it is a science, as Trubetskoy, Savitsky, and Gumilev claimed, that explained the linguistic, geographic, and economic inevitability of the Eurasian polity, its foundations are weak. Despite Trubetskoy’s invaluable contribution to the discipline of linguistics, his suggestion of a convergence of language and culture within the Eurasian supercontinent today seems bizarre, and in any case seems to have been subsumed by an often used assertion that the Russian language is the uniting factor in the Russian project.¹⁰¹ Likewise Savitsky’s claim of an archetypal symmetry in Eurasia’s geographic composition resembles mythology more than natural science. Meanwhile, his claim of a historic economic union between the fur trappers and herders of the Far North and Siberia and the agriculturalists of the

⁹⁹ Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism*, 98

¹⁰⁰ Panarin, *Pravoslavnaya tsivilizatsiya*, 42.

¹⁰¹ Vladimir Putin. “Annual Address to Federal Assembly” April 26, 2007. Accessed October 23, 2018. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24203>

South, while undeniable, does not demonstrate that Eurasia *must be* a whole political entity, only that it was. Gumilev's suggestion of a cosmic lightning bolt from the sun that invigorates a group with a world-conquering *passionarity* is equally fanciful, and the fact that his "laws" of social organization including *ethnos*, *subethnos*, and *superethnos* have not been adopted outside of the former Soviet countries suggests that their resonance owes more to their storytelling power than their sociological legitimacy. Dugin and Panarin's sharp transitions to geopolitics are equally confounding. While legitimizing their theories with the works of renowned social theorists, they present Eurasianism more as a plan of action motivated in unwavering self-interest.

Nor does Clover's suggestion that Eurasianism was "more therapy than scholarship," for early theorists adequately convey the power of the ideas Eurasianism contained. While early Eurasianists experienced a tragic feeling of dismemberment from their motherlands, this national-psychoanalytical interpretation does not adequately explain the vicissitudes of the ideology, nor does it account for an expansion of the ethnic boundaries of Eurasia as opposed to a reversion to racial-based chauvinism. The national-psychoanalytical approach also fails to account for the two very different circumstances in which Eurasianism grew: the first among patriotic, aristocratic, intellectuals in exile from a country that was poised to become an international superpower, and the second among rudderless ex-Soviets who sought a national identity in their post-Leninist country. The concept is further confounded by other former Soviet countries' adoption of Gumilevean Eurasianism after their national liberation from the Soviet Union.

A third interpretation of Eurasianism as a political movement also has shortcomings. Aleksandr Dugin most prominently espouses this view through his founding of a short-lived

Eurasianist Party in Russia, as well as an international Eurasian Youth Movement and his founding of Moscow State University's Center for Conservative Studies. Dugin and his allies seek to institutionalize a view of Russia based in Schmittian understandings of geopolitics mostly through a foreign policy agenda rooted in ideological and physical attacks on the proverbial "West." Duginians can point to Crimea as a manifestation of this ever-expanding movement, but Dugin's view focuses more on opposition to the West in response to a very specific geopolitical situation of twenty-first century Russia, than it provides an explanation for the vast territory of Russia. The political dimension also downplays the influential ideological foundations of Eurasianism which seem to be widespread in Russian society, from primary school to presidential speeches. Dugin's expansionism, as well as its adoption by the Russian ruling elite, can thus be attributed to a self-interested *realpolitik* as much as it can be considered a genuine political movement.

Perhaps a more fitting paradigm through which to understand Eurasianism lies in Roger Smith's theories of "people building," presented in *Stories of Peoplehood*.¹⁰² Disregarding the Westphalian paradigm of nation-states, Smith instead focuses on the specific challenges of multi-ethnic countries which must unite diverse peoples through what he calls "ethically constructed" stories that imbue the population with specific ethical characteristics. Smith argues for a constructivist view of peoplehood based primarily on stories or myths chosen in dialectic by the leaders and the people themselves. Analyzed in a political narrative-based framework, Gumilev's and the other Eurasianists' pseudo-scientific theories *are* part of the national mythology of Russia itself. By doing this, Trubetskoy's ostensible scientific "proof" of the linguistic

¹⁰² Smith, *Stories*, 2003.

convergence of peoples of Eurasia or Savitsky's geological proof of the symmetry of steppe and forest can be reimagined as stories in themselves instead of rigorous scientific endeavors. The Eurasianist story can thus be understood as an innovation on the traditional *people building* stories that date back at least to the chosen Israelites of the Old Testament, by modernizing it to include the powerful caché of "science." Eurasianism is compelling and versatile precisely because of its pseudo-scientific claims of naturalness, which it combines with questionable commitment to traditional spirituality. Residents of Russia find in it the very justifications they are looking for: the nationalist finds a rationale for geopolitical expansionism; the religious believer sees spiritual unity of Eurasian peoples; the Liberal applauds the rejection of the global inequality resulting from Western hegemony; and the technocrat prizes the ostensible scientific proof of the inevitability of Eurasian expansion; for all Eurasianism provides a powerful narrative that explains Russian exceptionalism.

As for Indigenous Peoples, as Smith argues, narratives are successful tools of political legitimacy if they can instill a population with a sense of both worth (for example, an improvement in living or economic conditions) and trust (interpreted as belief for the narrative itself) for the subjects of a polity. To Eurasianists, the value provided Indigenous Peoples lies in the existential guarantee of survival and ethnic cultural development, while they can find worth in the act of being part of a *superethnos* that counterposes a large majority of global civilization. While a guarantee of survival seems like a meager morsel, for Indigenous Peoples worldwide, there is certainly a danger of the eradication of a culture, though perhaps not in the same, violent way that once lurked in colonialism. Still, it is unclear whether this guarantee should be enough

for Indigenous Peoples to endorse or internalize the Eurasianist narrative offered by the Putin regime.

Of course, the Putin regime itself does not need the approval of the 250,000 or so Indigenous Russians to gain support from a majority of the Russian constituency, as it increasingly appears to apply the Eurasianist narrative to his governance. In 2010 at a speech to the international forum “The Arctic: a Territory of Dialogue,” Putin repeated an argument similar to Savitsky’s vision of historical economic interrelatedness. “It is difficult to survive in the Arctic when you are alone; it is a well-known time-tested fact,” he said, “Arctic nature itself makes individuals, groups of people and entire countries dependent on each other.”¹⁰³ In 2015, at his annual address to the Federal Assembly, Putin publicly adopted Gumilev’s term of *passionarity* for the first time before hundreds of dignitaries from the far-flung ethnic republics, and small-numbered peoples in their ethnic costumes. The regime’s increasing public alliance with the Orthodox Church and its adoption of Church-supported anti-sodomy laws (despite the fact that relatively few Russians actually attend church) suggests that the Kremlin views its marriage with Orthodoxy as an important “people building” strategy, as opposed to just a politically convenient union.

This thesis argues neither for nor against the plausibility of the Eurasianist vision but merely asserts that, more than anything else, it is a strategy for “people building” and not, as others have suggested, a “pseudo-science” that should be ignored because of its tenuous adherence to any scientific method, or a front for a racist and nationalist faction of Russia, or as a

¹⁰³ Vladimir Putin, *Prime Minister Vladimir Putin addresses the international forum, "The Arctic: Territory of Dialogue,"* September 23, 2010. Accessed October 16, 2018. <http://archive.premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/12304/>

teleological political movement akin to Marxism. Rather, it is a core element of Russia's modern self-identity that at its root is egalitarian and non-racialist. That is not to condone the homophobic, militaristic, or exclusivist actions that the Putin regime has justified using implicit Eurasianist theories. As Smith points out, "stories of peoplehood" inevitably exclude certain people despite the fact that in excluding these people, they forfeit a potential base of support. Thomas Jefferson, for example, disparaged the "merciless Indian Savages" in the Declaration of Independence. Indigenous Russians, on the other hand, find themselves in an honored position at the heart of the Eurasianist story of Russia as an integral part of the cultural, geographic and economic fabric of the Eurasian continent, a point that is underappreciated by Western scholars. While Russia has often failed to transmit this mythical egalitarianism into concrete steps for social improvement of its native people, Eurasianists have nonetheless offered a novel model of constructing its peoplehood.

From this review of a century of Eurasianist writings, several themes emerge as they relate to the Eurasianists' conception of their civilization and its role among the various minority ethnicities, as well as their perceptions of the West.

- **There is a natural affinity among the people of the Eurasian continent borne of delineated geographic conditions.** Therefore, the Indigenous Peoples of Russia are naturally drawn into the Russian state.
- **Russia is the embodiment of *superethnos* binding the diverse people of the Eurasian landmass.** Indigenous peoples are distinct and celebrated within the Russian state, but the Russian culture plays an *essential* role whereas other ethnicities are considered

constituent *ethnoi* or even *subethnoi*. Though the *subethnoi* strengthen the *superethnos*, their interests are subservient to the *superethnos*.

- **The Eurasian civilization is committed to the empowerment of peoples without necessarily empowering individuals.** Groups (including *ethnoi*, *subethnoi*, and *superethnoi*) are considered concrete entities that are just as “real” as individuals and are supported in the Eurasianist civilization.
- **The West and its commitment to individual rights and Liberal universalism is destructive to minority cultural differences.** The West has long practiced cultural and ethnic genocide, a point that is revealed in their treatment of Indigenous People. When Indigenous peoples in the West attempt to assert themselves, they are inevitably suppressed by the more dominant *ethnos*.

I will use these themes as the basis for a coding scheme to help guide an understanding of how Eurasianism functions as a framework in the Russian language media. As Roger Smith notes *Stories of Peoplehood*, “no one has ever engaged in ‘people building’ using completely raw wood.”¹⁰⁴ By this he means that stories are constantly refined built upon in what Smith describes as a dialectic process with the electorate. As in the philosophical parable of the Ship of Theseus, each individual part of the narrative is modified, kept, or replaced one piece at a time, until it is unclear whether it is in fact the same narrative. As mentioned previously, many of these themes are in many ways similar to Soviet narratives, which emphasized the preeminence of communitarianism in Eurasia and positioned the Soviet Union as the antipode to the US, but this project will seek to understand how the Kremlin uses these original foundations of Eurasianism

¹⁰⁴ Smith *Stories* 55

to innovate its narrative. These themes will thus serve the purpose of establishing the more foundational principles of Eurasianism that can be used to determine the ways in which the Kremlin is using the narrative framework in the 21st century.

Chapter 3: Russian Media Landscape: Development and Concepts

3.1 Introduction

The question for this project thus becomes: How does one determine exactly what the Kremlin's political narrative is? For any country, this could be a challenge, as narratives are not recorded in any official way, but exist nebulously in a variety of fields such as political speeches, foreign policy actions and national cultural programs. Especially in recent years, scholars have paid close attention to Eurasianism and its role in the political culture of Russia. Donald Clover's *Black Wind, White Snow*, for example, made much of Putin's adoption of the Gumilevean term *passionarnost* to illustrate how Eurasianist ideas had been integrated into the official parlance, and Marlene Laruelle's *Eurasianism: Ideology of Empire* used a variety of foreign policy documents and policies to find Eurasianist influence.

These approaches are useful for understanding the role of Eurasianism, but fail to take into account the important ways that population plays in accepting this narrative, which is essential for understanding how the Putin regime has maintained power. Adopting Roger Smith's contention, I will adopt the view of political narratives as dialectic between the ruling elite and the people with the ruling elite proposing narratives which are alternatively accepted or rejected by the democratic public.¹⁰⁵ While the media would be a useful tool for examining narratives in any country, Russia's unique landscape of government influence and self censorship make it a particularly good representative of the dialectic process described by Smith.

¹⁰⁵ Roger Smith. *Stories of Peoplehood: the politics and morals of political membership*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 37-42.

3.2 Development of Russian News Media Landscape

In the United States, the news media is often understood as a fourth branch of our federal government.¹⁰⁶ The press's independence is enshrined in the Constitution's First Amendment, and has been reaffirmed by the Supreme Court to include publishing of information related to national security, even when it can be damaging to the government. Journalists in the United States thus have relatively strong protections against government interference, as well as financial incentive to publish explosive political stories that will attract audiences and keep government in check. In Russia, the media plays a much different role. Lenin devoted a chapter in his famous pre-revolutionary collection "What is to be done?" to the topic of the creation of an All-Russian newspaper in order to synthesize the diverse interests of the regions. "In our time," he writes, "when Social-Democratic tasks are being degraded, *the only way* 'live political work' can begin is through live political agitation, which is impossible unless we have an all-Russia newspaper, frequently issued and regularly distributed."¹⁰⁷

Lenin's model of party-controlled media reigned throughout the twentieth century with a system of integrated messaging controlled by bureaucrats in Moscow, who oversaw the thousands of censors who made the Soviet Union's media system "unequalled in size and complexity anywhere in the world."¹⁰⁸ However, this stranglehold on information began to slip under *perestroika* and *glasnost*, and gave way to a wild west of free-market based media in the early 1990s. But the old Soviet habits were hard to break, and in the mid and late 1990s, media

¹⁰⁶ Cater, Douglass. 1959. *The Fourth Branch of Government*. Boston, Houghton-Mifflin [1959].

¹⁰⁷ Vladimir Lenin. "Plan obsche Rossiyskoi politicheskoi gazety," ("The Plan for an All-Russia Political Newspaper,") in *Chto delat'? (What is to be Done?)*, 1902. Chapter 5, accessed October 25, 2018. <https://www.marxists.org/russkij/lenin/1902/6-13-4.htm>

¹⁰⁸ Brian McNair. *Glasnost, Perestroika, and Soviet Media*. 1991. Ebook. Page 1.

companies were brought back under state influence, if not outright control. Even under the ‘liberal’ President Boris Yeltsin, the government devised new mechanisms of control by strategically controlling who was given broadcast licenses and renationalizing media.

In the mid-2000s, the Putin regime developed more active measures, creating most notably the public diplomacy channel RT, which many have suggested Russia used to strategically misinform its audiences as part of a new information strategy. In 2014, direct governmental influence reached a new height, as the Duma passed a ban on publication of “public calls to action violating the territorial integrity of the Russian federation,” which was used by the Russian government to prosecute journalists who reported that Crimea was part of Ukraine.¹⁰⁹ Russian media in the twenty-first century has become a primary tool of the Putin regime to air narratives of specific issues, as was the case in Ukraine, but also broader ideological messages. In its 2009 National Security Concept, Russia asserts the need to protect its cultural security by “establishing government contracts for the creation of cinematographic and printed works, television and radio programmes and internet resources.”¹¹⁰ While this might seem like a tenuous connection to national security, the National Security Concept is explicit about when it sees the threats: “attempts to revise perspectives on Russia's history, its role and place in world history; and by the propagandizing of a lifestyle based on permissiveness and violence, or racial, national and religious intolerance.”¹¹¹ This is a clear allusion to U.S. cultural hegemony, which Russia sees as undermining its inherent value system. The Strategy also

¹⁰⁹ Human Rights Watch, *Russia's assault on all fronts*. July 18 2017. Accessed December 2 2018. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/07/18/online-and-all-fronts/russias-assault-freedom-expression>

¹¹⁰ *National Security Strategy to 2020*, 2009, Section 83

¹¹¹ *National Security Strategy to 2020*, 2009, Section 84

directly links the value of “preserving and developing Indigenous cultures within Russia's multinational population,” as integral to national and cultural security. Russia’s sense of security thus encompasses mass media and is explicitly tied to its essential spirit, which it defines as conservative, traditional, and ethnically inclusive. Russia’s identity is also defined as territorial. In its Arctic Policy published in the same year it asserted an intention to “highlight in mass media the questions connected with national interests of the Russian Federation in the Arctic, including organization of exhibitions, conferences, round tables, devoted to history of development of the Arctic by Russian explorers, with a view of formation of a positive image of Russia.”¹¹² Mass media in Russia is directly tied with its Arctic, Indigenous Peoples, and national security and thus is a window into ideology of the ruling regime.

3.3 Overview of media development: from Soviet Censorship to Putin’s Self-Censorship

Despite a theoretical right to freedom of press, news media were strictly censored in the Soviet era. The 1977 Soviet Constitution, for example, states that “citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly, meetings, street processions and demonstrations.” However, this freedom was circumscribed by the open-ended qualifier that all speech must be “In accordance with the aims of building communism.”¹¹³ During the 1970s and 80s, *Glavlit*, the official censorship agency, employed about 70,000 censors, who punished violators with sentences of up to seven years of labor.¹¹⁴ High-level bureaucrats in the Central

¹¹² *Russia’s Arctic Policy*. 2009, Part 5:10:d

¹¹³ *Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*. 1977. Chapter 7 Article 51. Accessed October 3, 2018. <https://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/77cons02.html>

¹¹⁴ Epp Lauk. “The Antithesis of the Anglo-American news paradigm: news practices in Soviet journalism,” *Diffusion of the News Paradigm 1850–2000*, ed. Svennik Hoyer and Horst Pottker. (Goteborg, Sweden: NORDICOM, 2005), 175

Committee determined the ideological line, publishing a periodically updated guide called “Handbook of Classified Data” which banned reporting on the topics of “disasters with human losses, everything that concerned the armed forces, criminality and jails, cases of social unrest and protests, and of course, censorship itself,”¹¹⁵ while they themselves reveled in reading dissident literature and news from the West.¹¹⁶

Soviet journalists performed not as independent actors vying for the latest scoop, but as government functionaries whose primary purpose was to convey the message of Marxist socialism through mass media. Soviet media scholar Thomas Wolfe writes that Soviet journalism functioned to reinforce the party’s view that the country was not “fractured into competing groups, but rather as pieces of a larger whole whose harmonious coordination it was the party’s job to bring about.”¹¹⁷ News consumers likewise readily accepted the news media’s role as government functionaries.¹¹⁸ Despite this larger social project, Soviet policy makers understood that regional audiences required different forms of media, and tailored newspapers to both national identities and economic classes that were supplied from Ekaterinburg to Vladivostok, in Udmurt and in Tatar.¹¹⁹

However, the bedrock of the Soviet mass communication system began to crumble during his implementation of *glasnost* in Soviet society. Gorbachev first mentioned the word in 1984 as “an effective means of combating bureaucratic distortions and obliges people to take a

¹¹⁵ Lauk, *The Antithesis*, 177

¹¹⁶ Pomerantsev and Weiss *The Menace of Unreality*, 10

¹¹⁷ Thomas C. Wolfe *Governing Soviet Journalism : The Press and the Socialist Person after Stalin*. (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 7

¹¹⁸ Sarah Oates *Television, Democracy and Elections in Russia*. (London: Routledge, 2006), 1-20

¹¹⁹ Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism*, 7

more thoughtful approach to [...] the rectification of shortcomings and deficiencies.”¹²⁰

According to McNair, Gorbachev himself was elected partly due to the positive response to this speech from members of the Central Committee.¹²¹ Though *glasnost* can be interpreted as a liberalizing reform, it was also a reaction to inevitable cultural and technological processes that were unstoppable in Soviet society. *Samizdat*, or unsanctioned publications, were increasingly accessible to Soviet citizens; Western information sources such as Voice of America were more widespread; and Soviet citizens were increasingly traveling abroad and gaining access to alternative news sources.¹²² Gorbachev understood that these processes were at play and that, one way or another, citizens would learn the truth. Gorbachev’s program of *glasnost* can thus also be interpreted as a shrewd political move to adjust to evolving public opinion. In any case, *glasnost* represented a tectonic shift in the dissemination of information in the Soviet Union, as the focus of media changed from a celebration of the economic successes of communism to a blood sport of digging up its shortcomings.¹²³

Despite its positive connotations in the West, many Russians today see *glasnost* as a key factor that precipitated the collapse of the Soviet Union. With the floodgates of criticism open, Gorbachev himself became a victim of the new reality, which blamed him for the economic problems and increasing political chaos. When the Soviet Union was officially dissolved, state subsidies ended, and the news media had to adjust to a new reality based on free market economics. Instead of repeating a message to a captive audience, the media had to compete for

¹²⁰ Quoted in McNair, *Glasnost*, 44

¹²¹ McNair, *Glasnost*, 44

¹²² McNair, *Glasnost*, 43

¹²³ McNair, *Glasnost*, 46

audiences by entertaining them, which led to the rise of “tabloid-style” journalism and of television as the primary source of media consumption. Politicians, most notably Boris Yeltsin, discovered in 1991 the power that live TV could have when CNN broadcasted his image atop a tank speaking in front of the Russian Parliament during the military coup attempt, while sweaty, apparently drunken Soviet apparatchiks discredited themselves as they fumbled through their explanations of the coup. The visceral contrast of images catapulted Yeltsin to the presidency and doomed the Supreme Soviet to infamy.

Russian society in the 1990s appeared to be developing a commitment to free press. In 1990, as the USSR was collapsing, the Russian Parliament, headed by future-President Boris Yeltsin, adopted a new law *On the Press and other Mass Media* that established three principles of free press: complete abolishment of censorship, private ownership of the press for the first time, and journalists’ independence from their owners.¹²⁴ Legislators also clarified legal definitions of defamation and intellectual property, which allowed journalists to operate without fear of arbitrary crackdowns based on bureaucrats’ political whims. After Yeltsin’s election, the Constitution of 1993 established that “Everyone shall have the right to freely look for, receive, transmit, produce and distribute information by any legal way.”¹²⁵ In general, the period suggested that the Russian media’s development would align with the Western model as part of a larger Atlanticist movement towards universal, neo-liberal values. Soviet media scholar Andrei

¹²⁴ Andrei Richter. “Media Regulation: Foundation laid for free speech.” Ed. Kaarle Nordenstreng, Elena Vartanova, and Yassen N. Zassoursky. *Russian Media Challenge*. (Helsinki : Kikimora Publications, 2002), 116.

¹²⁵ Constitution of the Russian Federation. 1993. Article 45.1. Accessed October 3, 1993.
<http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-01.htm>

Richter wrote optimistically in 2002 that “Internal processes in society and in the media [...] make it impossible to reverse the flow of the free press back into the dictatorial river bed.”¹²⁶

Though Westernizers were optimistic, there were still indications that things had not really changed so much. One signal that the Westernizers had misread was the motivation of the new government, which was “governed more by an instrumental importance than by an idealistic approach to this value.”¹²⁷ Richter explains that Yeltsin and his administration used promises of media freedom and protection to win the support of the press and of the international community in the hope that Russia would be accepted into the G-7 and other international fora.¹²⁸ And despite federal protections for journalists, enforcement of rights was patchy and regional laws could be contradictory. Yeltsin’s famous charge to the regions to “Take as much sovereignty as you can swallow” apparently had implications for media control as well. Bashkiria, an autonomous ethnic republic sitting at the Western edge of the Ural Mountains, for example, established strict permitting requirements for reporters from media outside its borders and prohibited journalism that would undermine the “unity and integrity of the region [Bashkiria].”¹²⁹ Information was weaponized in the regions’ fight for self-determination, and the federal government was too weak to respond, despite the fact that these regional power-grabs contradicted federal laws and statutes.¹³⁰ This regionalization was of course anathema to the Eurasian tenet of continental political integrity, but it also enabled the development of regional

¹²⁶ Richter, *Media Regulation*, 122

¹²⁷ Richter, *Media Regulation*, 116

¹²⁸ Richter, *Media Regulation*, 116

¹²⁹ Richter, *Media Regulation*, 150

¹³⁰ Richter, *Media Regulation*, 151

identities that had previously been suppressed by the monopoly of news from the center in Moscow.

Other signs indicated that the Soviet habits of government interference had not entirely died. Privatization, which was extolled by Westernizers, proved to cut both ways. In the early nineties, TV channels and newspapers were sold off to private investors--sometimes wholly and sometimes in part--in an attempt to shake the government chokehold on media production. But this opened the door for corruption, as the state apparatus granted licenses preferentially to those with whom it wished to gain concessions. For example, the Kremlin gave the Russian channel NTV, a full-time license to operate on a broadcast TV channel in return for its complimentary coverage of President Yeltsin's candidacy, in violation of laws that prevented that very kind of interference.¹³¹ The state also retained rights to cancel broadcast licenses by a secret committee vote, should media companies violate the criminal code by "spreading purposefully misleading information."¹³² Writing in 2002, media scholar Zassoursky saw glimmers of a "corporate authoritarian" model--a precursor to Putin's more strong-armed consolidation of business and media that kept their power in return for allegiance to the president and obeyed certain unwritten rules--which he argued allowed the wealthy media moguls to monopolize information to re-elect Yeltsin in 1996.

Also during the late 1990s, western conceptions of PR (*piar* in Russian) began to take hold of media moguls and take the form of direct censorship. Marketers began to pay close attention to audiences' emotional responses first during the Yeltsin reelection campaign of 1996

¹³¹ Richter, *Media Regulation*, 120

¹³² Richter, *Media Regulation*, 137

and later during Putin's ascendancy in 1999-2000, when the latter's strongman image was developed. As Yeltsin's chosen successor and Prime Minister during the election campaign, Putin had certain advantages, but also a clear weakness: Nobody knew anything about him. Instead of a weakness, however, the rising Putin team used his anonymity as a strength to create his image from scratch. In this, they were aided by terrorist bombings of an apartment complex in Moscow on the eve of the election, which offered the perfect chance to define this new character to the electorate. Media coverage presented Putin as a masculine and energetic leader, who acted decisively in response to the bombings by sending Russian troops into Chechnya, the ostensible home region of the bombers. His approval rating shot up from 14 percent to 41 percent in about a month, and had risen to 71 percent two months later.¹³³ His election was all but assured, as was the new utility of television in manipulating voter preferences, while the theoretical regulatory mechanisms for non-bias were proven ineffective.¹³⁴ Russian media scholar Andrei Raskin explains that news channels devoted up to 48 percent of their political coverage to Putin just prior to the election, while the next closest candidate received just over 11 percent.¹³⁵ Media images showed Putin piloting his own airplane to his next meeting, and shedding tears over lost servicemen in Chechnya, solidifying both sides of his patriarchal image.¹³⁶ Since that time, scholars have noted the singularity of Putin and his team in controlling and responding to audience's perception of him, which involved a hybridization of new visual technologies with the Soviet Union's insistence on journalism's ideological mission. Russian

¹³³ Andrei Raskin. "Television: Medium to Elect the President." In Nordenstreng et al. 2002, 102, 106

¹³⁴ Raskin, *Television*, 114

¹³⁵ Raskin, *Television*, 110

¹³⁶ Raskin, *Television*, 110

media scholar Zassoursky calls this trend “manipulation using the laws of drama,”¹³⁷ in which drab, overly-censored news media of the Soviet era was replaced by sensationalist stories whose power was redoubled by the use of the relatively new medium of television. New techniques, such as de-contextualizing events, changing foci, and even staging events, were developed and applied to the new paradigm.¹³⁸

While there were similarities with Soviet times, the new landscape was more complex than a reversion to an essentially Soviet landscape as some claimed.¹³⁹ Though he re-nationalized the ownership of the main media stations, Putin left large shares in private hands. Though he removed the editor of the prominent daily newspaper *Izvestia*, he apparently did so through behind-the-scenes pressuring on the newspaper’s owners instead of through direct action,¹⁴⁰ and while journalists were threatened with retribution for criticizing the government, the threats came through extra-legal means.¹⁴¹ Putin further availed himself of the general confusion regarding media laws and instead issued Presidential edicts to supersede them with wording that left them open to interpretation.¹⁴² Furthermore, the globalization of media, which was first evidenced by CNN’s influential coverage of the breakup of the Soviet Union, added a new dynamic. Since news consumers had access to alternative media, news outlets had to be sure to cover what their competitors covered. The government primarily controlled the narratives and emphasized certain stories, rather than prohibiting stories entirely. As Damm and Cooley explain, “what becomes

¹³⁷ Ivan Zassoursky. “Media and Power: Russia in the Nineties”. In Nordenstreng et al. 2002, 87

¹³⁸ Zassoursky, *Media and Power*, 80

¹³⁹ Masha Gessen. "Fear and Self-Censorship in Vladimir Putin's Russia." *Nieman Reports* 59, no. 2 (Summer, 2005) 115. Accessed October 8, 2018. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/216752577?accountid=14470.115>

¹⁴⁰ Gessen, *Fear*, 121

¹⁴¹ Gessen, *Fear*, 115

¹⁴² Sarah Oates. "The Neo-Soviet Model of the Media." *Europe-Asia Studies* 59, no. 8 (2007): 1287. Accessed October 4. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20451453>.

truth is less about presenting facts (or even hiding them), and becomes much more about establishing and controlling the dominant narratives that take place through all the controlled media channels.”¹⁴³

Russia’s brief experience with a Western model of media left clear marks on the Russian media system. *Glasnost* precipitated an unraveling of the strictly controlled, ideological recitation of impressive statistics that characterized Soviet media and replaced it with a “wild west” of bright-lights and sensationalism that attracted and entertained audiences in ways that Lenin could never have imagined. But Putin harnessed the new market-based media and combined it with his new government’s developing ideology.

3.4 How Self-Censorship feeds Eurasianism

Despite cases of direct government attacks on the press in Russia, scholars such as Sarah Oates generally agree that the most pernicious effects on Russian freedom of the press lie in the fear inspired by acts of intimidation on journalists, leads to “self-censorship” and a reincarnation of many of restrictions of the Soviet system. Such self-censorship produces the same effects as actual censorship, under official freedom of the press policies. In a 2005 article for *Nieman Reports*, opposition journalist Masha Gessen describes the fear that she and her editorial staff at *Bolshoy Gorod* felt after news broke of the arrest of well-known opposition politician. With her editorial board, Gessen was forced to determine whether or not to cover these arrests with a headlining article and in-depth analysis of what the arrests would mean for journalism and free

¹⁴³ Emily Belle Damm and Skye Cooley. “Resurrection of the Russian Orthodox Church: Narrative of Analysis of the Russian National Myth.” *Social Science Quarterly (Wiley-Blackwell)* 98 (3) (August 2017), 945 doi:10.1111/ssqu.12429.

press in Russia, whether to include an oblique allusion to the arrests perceptible only to the close reader, or whether to omit the story entirely and continue to investigate other, less politically-charged topics. To Gessen, each option came with a cost to free press, since if she were silenced through some reprisal by the government, she could no longer write important stories that could affect her readers. Gessen writes:

This is how self-censorship works. One bargains with oneself. How much can I sacrifice before I lose respect for myself as a journalist? Can I respect myself if I don't give a story the play it deserves because I'm afraid? Can I respect myself if I kill a story because I'm afraid? Can I respect myself if I force the reader to look for the truth between the lines because I'm afraid?¹⁴⁴

For Gessen, who now writes for the *New Yorker*, these sorts of decisions are incompatible to her vision of her profession, and the media environment ultimately led her to leave Russia for the United States. Such self-exile, of course, only heightens the power of the original act of intimidation, since the reporters who choose to stay are more likely to be compliant to government wishes.¹⁴⁵ In this way, both journalists and audiences subordinate their own individual freedoms to what they see as a larger mission whose goal the state accomplishes. Even for journalists unaware of direct media intimidation, doubts and rationalizations such as those Gessen describes inevitably work their way into subconscious decision-making and lead to a conformism that can be strategically crafted by the regime.

¹⁴⁴ Gessen, *Fear*, 116

¹⁴⁵ Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss. "The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money," *Interpreter*, Special Report, November 22, 2014: 15, accessed October 13 2018. www.interpretermag.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/The_Menace_of_Unreality_Final.pdf.

Censorship and self-censorship nevertheless differ in important ways. In the latter, the individual reporter retains a voice and a theoretical freedom to report on whatever he or she wants. According to Schimpfoss and Yablokov's interview study of rank-and-file journalists in 2015, "reporters enjoy relatively large leeway to develop their creativity, which is crucial for state-aligned television networks to keep audience ratings up."¹⁴⁶ To the state, the individual voice serves the purpose of keeping the conversation interesting and fighting back against the monotony of the Soviet-era media. Since certain topics are deemed off-limits, journalists redirect their energies at topics that are deemed acceptable. Through careful execution of limited violence, the regime can steer journalists towards topics that serve official ideology. As Igor Yakovenko of the Moscow State Institute for International Relations notes, "if previous authoritarian regimes were three parts violence and one part propaganda, this one is virtually all propaganda and relatively little violence. Putin only needs to make a few arrests—and then amplify the message through his total control of television."¹⁴⁷

As the Putin inner-circle is off limits, investigative reporters can exercise their journalistic freedom by looking into failures of the U.S. or the UN, or investigating the inequalities of the Western economic system. Sometimes, such implicit censorship results in implausible stories: conspiracy theories about 9/11 being an inside job, UN cover-ups of health defects caused by unprotected uranium, or discrepancies in the Treaty of Cession of Alaska,¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Elizabeth Schimpfoss and Ilya Yablokov. "Coercion or Conformism? Censorship and Self-Censorship among Russian Media Personalities and Reporters in the 2010s." *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 22(2): (January 2014), 295-311

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in Pomeransteve, *Menace*, 10

¹⁴⁸ Ilya Yablokov. "Conspiracy Theories as a Russian Public Diplomacy Tool: The Case of Russia Today (RT)." *Politics* 35 (3/4): 301–15. doi:10.1111/1467-9256.12097.

while investigation into conspiracies by the Russian government are ignored. Through deliberate application of pressure, regimes can form a clear ideological agenda in the media.

Self-censorship perpetuates the tenets of Eurasianism through *de facto* prohibition of violations of three sacred assumptions: Vladimir Putin as the sole leader of the Russian state, the Russian Orthodox Church as an untarnished beacon of wholesome morals, and the Russian state as territorially sound without threats of fragmentation. Putin's image as a spiritual unifier of lands throughout the Russian Empire is unassailable, and even gaffes in his speech are not broadcast on television.¹⁴⁹ Reporters are expected to substitute the word *vlast* ("power") for Putin in any commentary that criticizes the government's conduct,¹⁵⁰ so that journalists can air grievances without undermining Putin's absolute authority. Likewise, Putin's image is trumped up when state media shares photos of Putin tranquilizing tigers or recovering ancient Byzantine artifacts, which reinforce his fitness to be president as well as his understanding of the diverse regions and histories of the wide empire. This also reinforces a Eurasianist vision of a uniter-of-nations autocrat.

The Russian Orthodox Church, meanwhile, has risen in prominence since the legislated atheism of the Soviet Union. In 2012, just after Putin's return to the presidency, five members of the all-female punk band Pussy Riot tried to perform an impromptu concert in the Cathedral of Christ our Savior in downtown Moscow as a protest against the increasing cronyism between the church and the state. Instead of reporting it as a political protest, however, the state-aligned media developed a unanimous narrative implying that the members of the group were part of a

¹⁴⁹ Schimpfoss, *Coercion*, 307

¹⁵⁰ Schimpfoss, *Coercion*, 307

deep-rooted conspiracy against the entire Russian civilization. Ilya Yablokov writes that “the media presented the Russian Orthodox Church as the main marker of Russian identity and the key force binding Russian people,” and thus above criticism.¹⁵¹ The energy that could perhaps have gone into investigating the corruption of the church that Pussy Riot was protesting instead was redirected to innuendos of elaborate conspiracy theories in which the Orthodox Church was besieged by a liberal cabal of homosexuals, blasphemers, and provocateurs bent on destroying the Russian state.¹⁵²

The idea of a renaissance of the Orthodox Church even entered the 2015 National Security Strategy which calls for a reassertion of “traditional Russian spiritual and moral values.”¹⁵³ While critics have accused the Russian Orthodox Church of being filled with corrupt charlatans masquerading as spiritual holy men, the mainstream media focuses on the leadership of the Orthodox Church in “protecting a greater shared history, culture, and language” of the Eurasian people.¹⁵⁴ The government thus takes on an almost theocratic character in line with many of the Eurasianists’ prescriptions, although the press usually portrays Putin as the dominant actor in the Church-State relationship.¹⁵⁵

The taboo against reporting on any political disunity within the Russian state is most important. In contrast to the Yeltsin era’s divestment of power to the regions, the Putin regime seems to be sensitive to slights against the unity of the nation and responds to any threats to

¹⁵¹ Ilya Yablokov, “Pussy Riot as agent provocateur: conspiracy theories and the media construction of nation in Putin’s Russia,” *The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, 42 (2014), 623

¹⁵² Yablokov, *Pussy Riot*, 628-629

¹⁵³ *Russian National Security Strategy*, December, 31 2015–Full Text (Russian).” Approved by the Russian Federation Presidential Edict 683. Moscow, the Kremlin.

¹⁵⁴ Damm, *Resurrection*, 950

¹⁵⁵ Damm, *Resurrection*, 950

territorial integrity with violent, extra-governmental retribution. The most famous case is of journalist Anna Politkovskaya, whose critical coverage of the Chechen Uprising from 1999 to 2005 led to international recognition and to her murder under mysterious circumstances in 2006 near her apartment in Moscow. Politkovskaya wrote stories critical of the Chechnyan government, which many viewed as a puppet of the Russian government, given its inordinate loyalty to Moscow despite tenuous cultural ties and a history of oppression of its own citizens. The killing of Politkovskaya, which many have speculated was orchestrated by the Kremlin, sent a clear signal to journalists working in Russia that questioning Russia's hegemony over nations of the Eurasian continent would not be tolerated. Politkovskaya's killing, though never solved, undoubtedly discouraged others from investigating wartime abuses. In any case, Putin codified this insistence on territorial integrity when, on December 30, 2013, he signed a law criminalizing "calls for separatism." The date was telling in a country where New Year is celebrated lavishly and symbols of rebirth and cleansing are tied to the holiday. Under the law violators face a fine of up to 306,700 rubles (\$9,500) or jail terms of up to five years for making public calls for action aimed against the country's territorial integrity.¹⁵⁶

The government enshrines the concept of territorial integrity in other ways as well. "Inter-ethnic journalism" ("mez-ethnicheskii zhurnalizm") is a term developed in Russia in the 1990s in response to the general mood of separatism that the nationalist-minded found objectionable. Just as in the Soviet Union, the Putin regime used the press as a tool to achieve political gains, and 'inter-ethnic journalism' became a catchphrase for a journalistic style that

¹⁵⁶ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *2013 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* February 27, 2014. Accessed October 5, 2018. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2013/eur/220324.htm>

described various ethnicities in ways that celebrated differences while suggesting an immutable tie with the civic Russian state. However, this connection was depicted differently than in Western countries, where civic and ethnic identities are more or less siloed. In inter-ethnic journalism, the very distinctiveness of the ethnicity is couched within the banner of the Russian ethnic and civic mythology. Russian scholar Iskhakov writes in his 2002 analysis of inter-ethnic journalism that he finds the themes of “acknowledgement of oneself as a citizen of Russia (as a piece of the whole); acknowledgement of the national language of Russia as native; acknowledgement of one’s own [ethnicity] as a composite of Russia; acknowledgement of the unity of Russia; and acknowledgement of the super-ethnic mythology (history) of the citizens of Russia.”¹⁵⁷ A code of ethics for “inter-ethnic journalism,” released in 2013 by the Guild of Inter-ethnic Journalism, is instructive. The preface to the *Ethical Code for Journalists Concerning Inter-Ethnic Themes in the Russian Federation* released in 2013 states that “the goal of the work of the journalist is not to suppress facts or problems, but to attract the Russian people’s interest and respect for the history and culture of the people inhabiting Russia, building the audience for the creation of a *stable and multi-ethnic society*” [italics are my own]. Subsequently, the text states that reporting on inter-ethnic issues is “the most important condition for the existence and development of a *unified Russian state*” [italics are my own] that reporting on conflicts should encourage their ending “peacefully in a constructive, inter-ethnic dialogue” that “doesn’t necessitate the interference of law-enforcement agencies” and that the journalist should strive for

¹⁵⁷ P. L. Iskhakov. “Etnicheskaya zhurnalistika kak faktor geopoliticheskoi rasvitiya Rossii” (“Ethnic Journalism as a factor in the geopolitical development of Russia.”) *Problems of Geopolitical Security of Russia: Materials of the All-Russian Scientific Practical Conference*. Yekaterinburg: Ural State University. September 25, 2009. 39. Accessed October 4, 2018. http://elar.urfu.ru/bitstream/10995/28555/1/pogbr_2009_10.pdf

the “harmonization of inter-ethnic relations in society.”¹⁵⁸ In addition to clearly contradicting Western journalistic standards--which encourage journalists to put aside any agenda other than reporting facts--the Code very clearly excludes reporting on secessionist movements within Russia. The Code’s suggestions clearly endorse a “unified Russian state” unmarred by ethnic tensions and seem to suggest that reporting must lead to “harmonization.” Any news piece that might provoke tension or conflict should not be published, the Code suggests. In this way, journalists reinforce the tenets of Eurasianism without any legal action from the Russian state.

This code and the general concept of inter-ethnic journalism as it has developed in Russia raises interesting questions. If a group within Russia were to demand secession from the Russian state, would an inter-ethnic journalist be allowed to report on it? Does reporting on the democratic wishes of an ethnically defined sub-state further the cause of the “harmonization of inter-ethnic relations in society”? And what of inter-ethnic journalists working abroad in, say, the United States? The Code seems to apply only to “a unified *Russian* state,” not necessarily to other states, which can be read as an implicit endorsement of reporting on such movements elsewhere, i.e. the United States. Does that then make it wrong? In 2014, two years after the Code was released, the Federal Assembly passed a law that calls for jail time for those who publish “public calls for actions violating the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation.” The Code, ostensibly composed by a guild of independent journalists, suggests support among the media for such a law. Media scholar Sarah Oates likewise finds public support in Russia for the

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Guild of Inter-ethnic Journalism. “Eticheskii kodeks zhurnalistov, osveschayushikh mezhetnicheskuyu tematiku v Rossiyskoi Federatsii” (“Ethical codex for journalists covering inter-ethnic themes in the Russian Federation.”). April 9 2012, accessed September 10 2018. <https://nazaccent.ru/about/eticheskij-kodeks/>

media as a “stabilizing” and “inspiring” force within society,¹⁵⁹ as opposed to the western conception of the media as a “watchdog.” Should the law be interpreted then as an affirmation of Liberal democratic principles since it is enacting the people’s will, or should it instead be viewed as a subversion of the Liberal democratic value of free press? The law also confounds understandings of who is leading in this social project of Russia: Is the regime leading through its establishment of laws and its surreptitious enforcement of censorship, or is it merely responding to the natural inclination of the *passionaries* of Eurasia to pursue a goal? The Putin regime seems to masterfully and intentionally confound these dynamics between the regime and the electorate.

In either case, the dynamic indicates that there is a narrative of ethnic harmony within the continent of Eurasia that is condoned by both the regime and accepted by the majority of the population, since there is little pushback against these forms of media influence. The Russian media landscape is much more diverse--and critical--than it once was, with instances of government mismanagement, bureaucratic corruption and political neglect as acceptable subjects of news reporting. But reporting on ethnic tensions is still categorically excluded, which suggests the importance that good ethnic relations play in Russia’s self-perception. The fact that Eurasianism is integrated into the code of conduct of Inter-ethnic journalism further provides evidence that the dynamics between majority and minority ethnic groups within Russia is an important component of the government and the population’s perception of their civilization.

¹⁵⁹ Sarah Oates. *Television, democracy, and elections in Russia*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 17

3.5 Public Diplomacy and Soft Power

The 2008 Russo-Georgian War marked a turning point in the Putin regime's view of the media. In August 2008, Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili appealed in fluent English for Western defense for his small, democracy-loving republic against the aggressive attacks of a bitterly wounded former superpower Russia that had stormed across the Georgian border in heavily armored tanks. Saakashvili and his country became a cause celebre for Western hawks searching for an enemy. Former Cold Warriors in the U.S. demanded solidarity with the seemingly defenseless Georgia, which had recently undergone some degree of liberalization, and shook their proverbial fingers at the bearish Russia, whom they accused of reverting to delusions of Soviet-era grandeur. Georgian public relations celebrated a triumph, despite Russia's clamping down even more forcefully in the disputed territory of South Ossetia. But the facts of the attack were murky and seemed to point at a different truth. A post-conflict UN investigation found that it had in fact been Georgia that had initiated a siege on the disputed breakaway region of South Ossetia, and that the Russians had only acted in response.¹⁶⁰ While both sides were accused of war crimes, there was no indication that Russia had acted any worse than Georgia. Nevertheless, the Putin regime had been humiliated on an international stage. Despite winning the ground war, it seemed that Russia had lost a larger war. Russian leadership ascribed its public relations defeat to its aged associations with the Soviet Union and an unflattering image abroad. With this in mind, Russia launched a wide campaign to remake its image to the post-Cold War world.

¹⁶⁰ Bruno Waterfield. "EU Blames Georgia for Starting War with Russia." *The Telegraph*. September 30, 2009. Accessed October 4, 2018. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/georgia/6247620/EU-blames-Georgia-for-starting-war-with-Russia.html>

The Russian Federation refocused its efforts on “soft power.” Defined by Harvard scholar Joseph Nye in 1990 as “the ability to affect what other countries want [...] with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions,”¹⁶¹ Nye’s influential argument proved useful to the floundering twenty-first century Russia. Nye’s article, published during the final breaths of the Soviet Union, argued that traditional military force was no longer the measure of political influence--that in an age of information, influencing the understandings and ideologies of foreign publics was the most effective way to produce change. Nye stated explicitly that the Soviet Union had benefited from its soft power through its “communist ideology, the myth of inevitability, and transnational communist institutions.”¹⁶² When the Communist Party collapsed shortly after the publication of his article, Soviet ideology also lost its appeal.

After nearly two decades of a floundering economy and a general lack of patriotism, the 2008 Russo-Georgian War provided a strong impetus for Russia to develop a soft power strategy. Its National Security Concept in 2013 (the first published after the Russo-Georgian War) explicitly endorsed soft power as a national security instrument. In Section 20, the Concept states that “Soft power is a comprehensive toolkit for achieving foreign policy objectives building on civil society potential, information, cultural and other methods and technologies alternative to traditional diplomacy, is becoming an indispensable component of modern international relations.”¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Joseph Nye “Soft Power.” *Foreign Policy*. (Autumn, 1990). 166-167

¹⁶² Nye, “Soft Power,” 167

¹⁶³ Interestingly, the Concept accuses the U.S. of abusing “soft power” in the same section, stating that “At the same time, increasing global competition and the growing crisis potential sometimes creates a risk of destructive and unlawful use of “soft power” and human rights concepts to exert political pressure on sovereign states, interfere in their internal affairs, destabilize their political situation, manipulate public opinion, including under the pretext of financing cultural and human rights projects abroad”

Russia's task was to shed the image of the injured, bitter former-super power that was over-eager to take out its resentment at having lost the Cold War on smaller, defenseless neighbors. But what was the new image to be? The question of the "Russian idea" has a long and fraught history extending back centuries, but after the Georgian War, the question became more explicitly linked to national security. The 2009 National Security Strategy, approved less than a year after the war with Georgia, included Article 84, which called for acknowledging Russia's "cultural-moral values, by reinforcing the spiritual unity of the multinational population of the Russian Federation and the international image of Russia as a country with a very rich traditional and dynamically developing contemporary culture."¹⁶⁴ Russia's international image was thus explicitly linked to its culture and religion. In 2011, Igor Yurgens, then Chairman of the Institute of Contemporary Development, published an influential op-ed entitled "Hard Call to Soft Power" in which he outlined Russia's two main points of attraction to the world as being 1) "the patron of Orthodox Slavs" and a "unique multi-ethnic alliance of nations"¹⁶⁵ and 2) as an alternative ideology to Western liberalism's hegemony.¹⁶⁶ Both ideas are foundational to Eurasianism but particularly reminiscent of Aleksandr Panarin's exposition on "Orthodox civilization" in a global world. Instead of aggressors, the new paradigm recast Russia a protector of its "unique multi-ethnic alliance" from the West's pernicious liberalism, embodied by Georgian President Saakashvili.

¹⁶⁴ Russian Federation, 2009, "Strategia Natsional'noi Bezopastnosti Rossiiskoi federatsia do 2020" ("National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2020") May, 13, 2009. <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/424>

¹⁶⁵ Igor Yurgens. "Zhestkii Vysov 'Myagkoi Sile'" ("Hard Call to 'Soft Power,'"") *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*. September 16, 2011, accessed September 25, 2018. <https://rg.ru/2011/09/16/yurgens.html>

¹⁶⁶ Greg Simons. "Russian public diplomacy in the 21st century: Structure, means and message." *Public Relations Review*: 40 (2014), 445

Russian leadership determined that a key shortcoming in its current strategy was the lack of news sources that could convey messages to an international audience. This was particularly crucial in a dynamic situation such as the one in Georgia, but also necessary in order to establish a new image of Russia during times of peace. As Nye states, with new technology, “Information becomes power, especially before it spreads.”¹⁶⁷ The cable news channel *Russia Today* had been created in 2005 when the ideas about Russia’s need to rebrand as a public diplomacy effort were in their infancy, but within a decade the network would become an international force. At its founding *Russia Today* was a standard medium for public diplomacy, akin to *BBC* or *Deutsche Welle*, which featured mostly general, human-interest stories about Russia that emphasized a softer face of the country, with coverage of quaint village life and scientific expeditions.¹⁶⁸ Few paid attention. In the aftermath of the Russo-Georgian War, however, *Russia Today* took a turn that would have public diplomacy scholars scratching their heads. Rebranded as an ambiguous sounding *RT*, the network turned its focus away from promoting its own ideology and began sharply criticizing the West. Taking up stories of dissatisfied groups within the U.S., such as the Occupy Wall Street movement, which had been largely ignored by the Western media, *RT* found resonance with many Westerners who felt disenfranchised after the financial crisis of 2008. Its viewership grew exponentially. Today it claims a global audience of over one billion on YouTube through its five languages.¹⁶⁹ While some of *RT*’s practices have been denounced for journalistic violations, its coverage of the Occupy Wall Street movement earned the network an

¹⁶⁷ Nye, *Soft Power*, 164

¹⁶⁸ Yablokov *Conspiracy Theories*, 305

¹⁶⁹ “About RT.” Accessed September 24, 2018. Rt.com/about-us/

International Emmy nomination in 2012, legitimizing its status as a news network that had previously been seen as a propaganda arm of the Russian government.

Although *RT* portrays itself as a state-funded but privately run business akin to the *BBC*, it exhibits several key differences. For instance, the *BBC*'s board of directors is publicly known so that conflicts of interest can be identified, while *RT* keeps its board of directors secret. One of the former board members is reportedly Presidential Administration Deputy Chief of Staff Aleksey Gromov, who is said to oversee *RT*'s political coverage and regularly meets with editor-in-chief Simonyan to share classified information with her.¹⁷⁰ The U.S. State Department's analysis also suggests that bureau managers are rotated from foreign service posts, "suggesting a close relationship between *RT* and Russia's foreign policy apparatus."¹⁷¹ Finally, Simonyan herself has stated that the organization she oversees is subservient to the Kremlin: "since *RT* receives budget from the state, it must complete tasks given by the state."¹⁷² *RT* sees itself as one tool pushing Russia's larger civilizational mission.

As Weiss and Pomerantsev note, *RT*'s motto of "Question More" appeals to liberals who feel disenfranchised from Western capitalism economically, while its conservative religious leanings make it attractive to religious conservatives.¹⁷³ To politically left-leaning viewers, *RT* frames Russia as a sort of representative of other emerging countries that had been oppressed by the West's economic hegemony in the post-Cold War landscape, by focusing on a general criticism of Western hegemony. On the right, *RT*'s portrayal of Russia as a "traditional" and

¹⁷⁰ National Intelligence Council (U.S.). 2017. *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent Us Elections*. Ica, 2017-01d. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, National Intelligence Council: 10

¹⁷¹ National Intelligence Council, 2017, 10

¹⁷² National Intelligence Council, 2017, 9

¹⁷³ Pomerantsev and Weiss, 2014, 19

“religious” culture has garnered the endorsement of the likes of Pat Buchanan and Donald Trump (though as Pomerantsev and Weiss point out, it is a strange label for a country in which only 4 percent of people attend church regularly).¹⁷⁴ While its actual reach remains unclear, *RT* claims an impressive social media following, with three million unique views daily and fifty million monthly,¹⁷⁵ suggesting that Russia has been successful in its public diplomacy effort.

3.6 Information Warfare

While Russia’s “public diplomacy” influences audiences through attraction, “information warfare” describes a more adversarial approach to media framing. The West had preferred “public diplomacy,” at least since the end of the Cold War to attract adherents to their bright vision of global liberal democracy. In Russia, however, the term “information war” has found renewed popularity parallel with Russia’s more assertive foreign policy. Beginning with Putin’s rise, Russian pundits and scholars in the 2000s have been hammering alarmism about the information war between Russia and the West that is not only active but has been un-interrupted since the Cold War. Acknowledging Russia’s lag in the information arena, one Russian scholar proclaims that “modern researchers call this a ‘psychological war,’ insofar as it is aimed at the destruction of traditional social order, at the destruction of the bonds that unite people and their society in a hierarchical system,”¹⁷⁶ implying that the United States consciously aims to disrupt Eurasia’s teleological mission. Another Russian scholar states that “These wars are

¹⁷⁴ Pomerantsev and Weiss, 2014, 19

¹⁷⁵ “About RT.” Accessed September 24, 2018. Rt.com/about-us/

¹⁷⁶ Nuriya Mansurova Mukhamedzhanova. “Informatsionnaya voyna kak tip mezhsivilizatsionogo vzaimodeistvie.” (“Information War as a type of inter-civilizational interaction.”) *Gramota*: 2(64) (2016), 117

acknowledged to be no less dangerous than armed conflicts in that they may result in an irreparable harm to the object of the action (e.g. a country, people, individuals, etc.) or even to outright annihilation.”¹⁷⁷ The Eurasianist Dugin boldly proclaims that just as technology has forced a shift from a commodity economy to an information economy, so too has the main battleground in civilizational conflict shifted from the military to the informational sphere.¹⁷⁸

Ukraine in 2014 was a testing ground for these new theories of war. Though unmarked Russian troops did not set foot on the ground until 2014, the groundwork for the invasion was being laid well before that. In 2009 in response to Russian channels operating in Ukraine that Kiev’s pro-Western government labeled fascist and Nazi-sympathetic, President Viktor Yushenko signed laws clamping down on media outlets critical of the national culture of Ukraine and asked translators to stop broadcasting these stations.¹⁷⁹ While intended to stop dissemination of Russian news sources, the law in fact empowered them through reinforcing their narrative of an authoritarian crackdown on ethnic Russians. Yushenko’s move was also ineffectual, because the Eastern part of Ukraine is predominantly ethnic Russians who themselves could claim to be part of the national culture of the geographically defined Ukraine.¹⁸⁰ These Russian media, presumably with state support, developed a narrative that aligned pro-Western Ukrainians with fascism and implied that Kiev was preparing for a

¹⁷⁷ I. V. Kultysheva and P. V. Vishnyakova “Information warfare against modern Russia.” *Odin poyas--Odin put’: Lingvistika vzaimodeistviya: materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii. (One zone--one path. Linguistics of Interactions: Materials of the International Scientific Conference.)* Ed. A.P Chudinov and Sun Yoikhua. Yekaterinburg, (October 16-21 2017.) 80. Accessed October 3, 2018.

<http://politlinguist.ru/materials/conf/2017.pdf#page=96>

¹⁷⁸ Dugin, *Geopolitics of Post-Modernism*, Chapter 6

¹⁷⁹ Alexander Bogomolov and Oleksandr Lytvynenko. “Ghost in the Mirror: Russian Soft Power in Ukraine.” *Chatham House*, January, 2012: 10. Accessed October 3 2018.

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/181667>

¹⁸⁰ Bogomolov, *Ghost in the Mirror*, 10

crackdown on non-Ukrainian ethnicities, including Russians, that would be reminiscent of the Holocaust.¹⁸¹ As Pomerantsev and Weiss describe it, Russia's model assumes that "information precedes essence;"¹⁸² that is, the narrative groundwork that was set prior to the conflict makes news consumers more likely to fill gaps in line with their own confirmation biases, while ignoring facts that contradict the biases. As the conflict escalated and Russian media consolidated control over news media in the disputed Eastern regions of Ukraine, news stations intensified their narrative, using tactics to dehumanize the pro-Western Maidan protesters by showing them in bandanas and masks, committing acts of violence, and by omitting personal interviews with them that could have given them a human face.¹⁸³ The media even repeated unsubstantiated reports of atrocities against Russian nationals by Ukrainians.¹⁸⁴ The U.S. House of Representatives convened hearings on the Ukraine crisis in 2015 during which a witness called Russia's actions the "the most amazing information warfare blitzkrieg since the Supreme Allied Commander General Philip Breedlove after the annexation of Crimea."¹⁸⁵

The most recent U.S. presidential elections again evidenced Russia's larger strategic offensive. The election prompted the CIA to issue the report entitled "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections" outlining the actions taken by Russian media

¹⁸¹ Bogomolov, *Ghost in the Mirror*, 10

¹⁸² Pomerantsev and Weiss, *How the Kremlin Weaponizes*, 30

¹⁸³ Sergei A. Samoilenko, Elina Erzikova, Sergey Davydov, and Alexander Laskin. "Different Media, Same Messages: Character Assassination in the Television News during the 2014 Ukrainian Crisis." *International Communication Research Journal*, no. 2 (2017): 35. Accessed December 2 2018.

¹⁸⁴ Werner, Gregory. "What Americans can learn from fake news in Ukraine." *Rough Translation*. August, 17, 2017. Accessed October 3, 2018. <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/21/544952989/rough-translation-what-americans-can-learn-from-fake-news-in-ukraine>

¹⁸⁵ *Confronting Russia's Weaponization of Information : Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Fourteenth Congress, First Session April 15, 2015*. Washington : U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2015. Accessed October 3 2018. <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20150415/103320/HHRG-114-FA00-Transcript-20150415.pdf>

operating in the U.S. The report highlighted RT editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan's repeated use of the term *information war* to describe her network's efforts in Ukraine and Georgia and more broadly.¹⁸⁶ One witness who testified at the hearing, a former American *RT* employee also called for retaliation, stating that "We shouldn't let it slide. We need to take notice and take action." Russia's information warfare has thus provoked a response--or at least calls for response--that feed into an Eurasianist narrative of a clash of civilizations.

Tellingly, the most prominent Eurasianists today seem to have been at the vanguard of this new style of media interventionism. Though the West responded only recently, the Eurasianist Aleksandr Dugin called for an all-out *information war* based on what he calls the "network centric" methods to be conducted against the U.S. at least since 2007. Dugin claims that Russia's capacity to wage information war was crippled during the Post-Soviet nineties and that in 2007 it still used "agrarian" techniques compared to the technologically sophisticated West. The U.S., meanwhile, had a decade-long head start during the Russian Federation's early years, and had been implanting pernicious ideas about democracy and universal human rights in Russian society over the past few decades. Dugin's call for a sophisticated, large-scale project aimed at disrupting American society resembles what was seen in the 2016 U.S. election, in which troll farms in Russia used fake social media accounts to spread false information from media outlets like RT to exploit deep-seated rifts in American society. While the U.S. political establishment was taken off guard, Dugin's 2007 book provides a theoretical basis for the actions:

¹⁸⁶ Office of the Director of National Intelligence. *Background to "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections": The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution*, January 6, 2017: 17. Accessed October 10, 2018. https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf

This calls for the creation of a special group which should include separate, high-ranking officials, the best *passionary* [adopting Gumilev's term] cadres of different special forces, intellectuals, academics, engineers, political scientists, a corpus of patriotically-minded journalists, and creators of culture. The task of this group would be the formation of a model for a Eurasian network, using the foundational elements of American post-modernism and approach to information, but aimed symmetrically against the vector of the Americans' actions.¹⁸⁷

It is unclear whether this book inspired the Kremlin's election campaign but clearly Dugin was thinking along parallel lines of the officials who instigated the campaign.

Igor Panarin, (not to be confused with the aforementioned Aleksandr Panarin), another prominent Eurasianist and member of the Russian Academy of Military Sciences, is even more explicit in combining Eurasianism with information warfare. In *Information Warfare and Geopolitics* (2006), he writes that "it is expedient to intensify and strengthen information and analytical support for the ongoing policy of accelerating the construction of Eurasian Rus'," and that "the key moment in today's World development can be formulated thus: Eurasian Rus' against the New Britannic Empire. Victory in this information war can only be achieved through the integration of all the countries of CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States, a voluntary council made up of former Soviet Republics], and the construction of a Continental Arc."¹⁸⁸ To do this, he recommends intensifying the Russian language broadcasts in the territory of the

¹⁸⁷ Aleksandr Dugin. *Geopolitiki Postmoderna (Geopolitics of Post-Modernism.)* Ebook. Saint Petersburg: Amfora, 2007. Accessed September 20, 2018 http://propagandahistory.ru/books/Aleksandr-Dugin_Geopolitika-postmoderna/35

¹⁸⁸ Igor Panarin. *Informatsionnaya voyna i geopolitika (Information War and Geopolitics)*. Ebook. Moscow: Pokolenie, 2006. Chapter 21. Accessed September 24, 2018. <https://public.wikireading.ru/77143>

former Soviet Union, particularly in Ukraine. He suggests building a broadcasting station in Southern Russia that could translate Russian channels to all of the areas of southern Ukraine and Crimea that would cost a mere \$300,000.¹⁸⁹ While it is unclear whether this project materialized, clearly the Russian invaders prioritized the dissemination of Russian news during the invasion itself and during the ensuing referendum on joining Russia.¹⁹⁰ As the conflict in Ukraine escalated, the pro-Russian government in Crimea refused to acknowledge the new, pro-Western government in Kiev and shut down all Ukrainian news channels on the peninsula and even blocked access to Ukrainian news websites.¹⁹¹ When unmarked Russian soldiers marched into Crimea, one of the first things they did was seize television stations.¹⁹²

3.7 Conclusion

Although the media landscape has changed in the wake of Soviet collapse, in that it now allows for more individual freedom and creativity, the mass media still plays a different role in Russia than they do in the West. Both producers and consumers see Russian news media as a tool for promoting an ideological mission instead of as unbiased purveyors of objective information. Though some, such as Weiss and Pomerantsev, argue that the most pernicious effects are the strategic obfuscation of the very concept of truth, they also acknowledge an underlying ideological narrative that endorses some of the most contentious tenets of

¹⁸⁹ Panarin, *Informatsionnaya voina*, Chapter 21.

¹⁹⁰ Margarita Jaitner. "Russian Information Warfare: Lessons from Ukraine." *Cyber War in Perspective: Russian Aggression against Ukraine*. Ed. Kenneth Geers. (Tallinn, Estonia: NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Center of Excellence: 2015), 91.

¹⁹¹ Reporters Without Borders. "Summary of attacks on media." August 31, 2015. Accessed October 3, 2018. <https://rsf.org/en/news/summary-attacks-media>

¹⁹² Reporters Without Borders. "Reporters at centre of media storm in Eastern Ukraine." August 31, 2015, accessed October, 3, 2018. <https://rsf.org/en/news/reporters-and-media-centre-storm-eastern-ukraine>

Eurasianism. This ideology has been molded through self-censorship, as well as occasional violent extra-judicial physical intimidation and murders, which has made questioning territorial unity, the authority of President Putin, or the sanctity of the Orthodox Church particularly taboo topics, in turn perpetuating Eurasianist worldviews to mass audiences. Public diplomacy efforts, spearheaded by the Kremlin, have also been used to advance a view of Russia as a special civilization of deep spiritual and traditional values to the Russian diaspora abroad, where it has also seeped into the larger Western public, despite the questionable nature of Russia's "conservatism." The concept of "information warfare" has also been reintroduced into mainstream Russian discourse and advanced by Western media and government, reinforcing predictions of the Eurasianists about civilizational confrontations. As Damm and Cooley (2017) suggest, the global media environment does not suppress stories outright, but emphasizes certain stories to craft a cohesive narrative.¹⁹³ Russian and even American audiences have recognized manifestations of Eurasianism on issues of foreign policy, suggesting that the Russian effort has been successful. While the aforementioned Eurasianist themes have been perpetuated owing to their alignment with larger geopolitical dynamics, Eurasianism as an ideology is much broader than just geopolitics. As discussed in Chapter 2, the ideology pays particular attention to the interactions between various ethnicities or *ethnoi*. Indigenous peoples' rights and welfare are a less politically-charged topic than the war in Ukraine or the 2016 presidential election, and thus less studied, but can offer an equally fruitful focus of study to glean insights into how the Russian state-media apparatus develops a narrative concerning a particular issue.

¹⁹³ Damm, *Resurrection of Russian Orthodox Church*, 245

Chapter 4 Research Design

4.1 Introduction

As Eurasianism has become a prominent narrative of modern Russian discourse, the question arises of exactly how Eurasianism functions to legitimize Russia's sovereignty over its non-majority population. As the media serves as a representation of both the Kremlin's ideology and the public's reaction to it, it offers a medium through which to sharpen understanding of Eurasianism's role. Of course, the media of any country is vast, and an analysis of all of the relevant articles would be impossible, so the first task is winnowing down the scope of the potential data to something manageable.

4.1.1 Media Content Analysis

Kimberley Neuendorf, a prominent content analysis researcher, defines media content analysis as “the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics” that can include “written text or transcribed speech, as well as techniques that focus on non-textual message content, including pictorial images, graphical elements, moving images, nonverbal behaviors, music, and sounds.”¹⁹⁴ Harold Lasswell, former president of the American Political Science Association, first developed the methods in the 1920s, to study propaganda messaging during the First World War; the field has continued to grow since then. Neuendorf reports that “in the field of mass communication research, content analysis has been the fastest-growing technique over the past 20 years or so.”¹⁹⁵ As Neuendorf explains, one of the primary--though contested--distinctions of media content analysis is whether it is qualitative or quantitative in

¹⁹⁴ Kimberley Neuendorf and Anup Kumar. *The International Encyclopedia of Political Communication*. First Edition. Ed. by Gianpietro Mazzoleni. (John Wiley & Sons, Inc: 2002), 2.

¹⁹⁵ Kimberley Neuendorf. *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), 1.

nature. Neuendorf writes that “the distinction between quantitative and qualitative analyses of message content is sometimes contested, varying between (a) whether the constructs of interest are principally quantitative or qualitative in nature, and (b) whether the measures of these constructs result in quantifications or more qualitative (either microscopic or holistic) descriptions of the messages.”¹⁹⁶ Often quantitative and qualitative analysis is used in complementary ways, which will be the case for this project.

Neuendorf calls for analysis based in the scientific method with “attention to objectivity-intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing,”¹⁹⁷ but also emphasizes that media content analysis can be 1) *descriptive*, 2) *inferential*, 3) *psychometric*, and 4) *predictive*.¹⁹⁸ This project will be most concerned with the descriptive and inferential components of the Kremlin-aligned media’s portrayal of Indigenous Peoples using the framework of Eurasianism for more implicit analysis. Of course, as Neuendorf points out, the predictive and inferential roles are subject to the researcher’s interpretation, and thus the descriptive data gathered are used to facilitate conclusions, and cannot be conclusive.¹⁹⁹

Due to its national security importance, Russian media has been relatively well-studied in recent years. Previous content analysis of Russian media has focused on contentious political issues, such as the Russo Georgian War, the 2016 presidential election, or the annexation of Crimea. For example, Pavel Slutskiy and Dimitrii Gavra use media content analysis to assess Donald Trump’s popularity in Russia. Slutsky and Gavra selected 91 texts from Kremlin-

¹⁹⁶ Neuendorf, *International Encyclopedia*, 2

¹⁹⁷ Neuendorf, *Content Analysis*, 10

¹⁹⁸ Neuendorf, *Content Analysis*, 53

¹⁹⁹ Neuendorf, *Content Analysis*, 53

affiliated media that included television (*NTV, ITV Channel, Rossiya TV*), print (*Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Vzglyad, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Moskovskii Komsomolets, Sobesednik, Izvestia*), and online sources (*lenta.ru, dni.ru, fb.ru, gazeta.ru*).²⁰⁰ The authors notably omitted *RT*, despite its large international reach, likely because they focused on perceptions within Russia and not on the Russian diaspora or the international public. Slutsky and Gavra attributed Trump's popularity in Russia to the lexical framing of the candidate during the election. Russian media often referred to Trump with words such as *honest, sincere, billionaire, entrepreneur*, and *popular TV host*, while the media demonized his opponent Clinton as an explicitly anti-Russia candidate. The authors found that 93.5 percent of references to Trump in the selected media were positive toward the Republican candidate, and 100 percent of Trump's quotations about Russian foreign policy were positive.²⁰¹

Alzahrani and colleagues' 2018 analysis of Russian media framing of the Ukraine crisis of 2014 offers another useful example of how Russian media has been analyzed. The authors collected data from a defined timeframe, inductively developed a set of framing categories, coded the data, and then conducted a time series analysis, which they cross-referenced with significant phases of the Ukrainian operation in Russia.²⁰² The paper identified five frames the Russian state-aligned media used that served to justify incursion into Ukraine: 1) association of pro-Western Kievan government with fascism and Nazism, 2) discrimination against ethnic

²⁰⁰ Pavel Slutskiy and Dimitrii Gavra. "The Phenomenon of Trump's Popularity in Russia: a Media Analysis Perspective." *American Behavioral Scientist* vol. 61(3) (2017), 336. Accessed November 2 2018. DOI: 10.1177/0002764217693281

²⁰¹ Slutskiy and Gavra, *Phenomenon of Trump's popularity*, 342

²⁰² Sultan Alzahrani, Nyunsu Kim, Scott W. Ruston, Jason Schlachter, Steve R. Corman. "Framing shifts of the Ukraine Conflict in Pro-Russia News Media." *International Conference on Social Computing, Behavioral-Cultural Modeling and Prediction and Behavior Representation in Modeling and Simulation*. July, 2018. Accessed September 25, 2018. <https://link.springer.com/conference/sbp>

Russians by Ukrainian government, 3) derogation of the history of the Soviet Union, 4) general criticism of the Kievan government, and 5) justification of the invasion of Crimea. In this project, researchers eventually trained computers to conduct the coding. While Alzahrani et al.'s project considers a much larger scale (372 media outlets and 100,000 articles) the inductive principles for determining coding frameworks resemble those of my project. Alzahrani et al. sought to identify the exact time of the change in media framing or intensity that would allow them to hypothesize the general rules of a supposed Russian "playbook" for an armed takeover of a sovereign country based on the principles of hybrid warfare, and so they focused their analysis on time scale down to the day of publication. Because my project focuses on general theories of Eurasianism and how they apply, the articles collected in my project will be coded by year.

Perhaps the most relevant research method to my topic is Emily Belle Damm and Skye Cooley's 2018 narrative analysis of the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russian society.²⁰³ The authors collected 622 news items that contained the keyword "Orthodox Church" that aired between 2014 and 2015. After a preliminary analysis, the coders developed four thematic categories--the reconciliation of the church and the Russian state, the church as a unifier of Slavic people, the church as a moral authority, and the church's relationship to Russian citizens--which they then applied to the larger dataset. The authors then analyzed the articles referring to each thematic category to depict the narrative put forth by the Russian state in

²⁰³ Emily Belle Damm and Skye Cooley. "Resurrection of the Russian Orthodox Church: Narrative of Analysis of the Russian National Myth." *Social Science Quarterly (Wiley-Blackwell)* 98 (3) (August 2017), 945 doi:10.1111/ssqu.12429.

relation to the Russian Orthodox Church. Damm and Cooley's relates close to this study, owing to its focus on the *narrative* aspect of the media content, a focus that this project shares.

As mentioned previously, the theoretical framework of Eurasianism is the basis for the coding scheme. As the research question is "To what extent does Eurasianism inform the Russian media's coverage of Indigenous Peoples in Russia and the United States?" the concepts previously developed about the Eurasianism's view on the relationship between the central government and Indigenous Peoples is paramount. The comparative nature of the project--i.e. the Russian media's portrayal of Native Americans *vis-a-vis* its portrayal of Indigenous Russians--necessitates the division of the project into two sections because of the complicated interplay between the histories of colonization and Eurasianism. These sections will henceforth be called the *Section 1: Indigenous Russians* and *Section 2: Native American History*

4.1.2 Coding

The basic coding began with rating each news article as taking either a positive, negative, or neutral tone in its description of the relationship between the Indigenous Peoples and the federal government. I decided to narrow it down to the focus on the Federal-Indigenous relationship since that was what best illustrated the power relationship within the country as related to the *subethnos-superethnos* paradigm. As the *subethnos* was a unit of the *superethnos*, which is embodied by Moscow and Putin, focusing on this relationship--as opposed to the overall living conditions of the Indigenous Peoples--served to turn uncover the way that the Eurasianist theme of an organic political union of peoples manifests. For example, some articles were focused on the rectification of a problem of Indigenous Peoples being denied subsistence privileges because of faulty documentation. Even though this made Indigenous Peoples lives

difficult, the articles often portrayed them as working closely with the federal government to rectify the problem. In other words, instead of focusing on the fact that the government had created the problem originally, the articles focused on the government's role in fixing the problem. These articles were thus coded as *positive*, since they portrayed a positive working relationship between Indigenous groups and the government. Most articles were coded as neutral, since they didn't portray any sort of relationship between the federal government and the Indigenous Peoples, and a few were coded as *negative*. These were articles that clearly indicated a tense relationship between the federal government and Indigenous Peoples, such as protesters at the Standing Rock calling the government's approval of Keystone XL Pipeline "ecological genocide." This preliminary coding scheme helped verify my original contention of a Eurasianist influence in the news media.

Next, I established a coding scheme for each section in response to the question: "How are Eurasianist themes manifested in the Russian media's portrayal of Indigenous Peoples?" As Eurasianism addresses the relationship of the periphery (Indigenous Peoples) to the center (U.S. federal government or Russia), the analysis focuses on Indigenous Peoples' relationships with their respective federal governments. Based on a preliminary analysis and common sense, one would predict that, in general, a Eurasianist influence on the news media's coverage would assume that the Russian-Indigenous Peoples relationships will be portrayed in a positive light, since Eurasianism assumes an organic fusion of the people of Eurasia, while the U.S.-Indigenous Peoples relationships will more often be portrayed as fraught, since Eurasianism posits oppression of minorities in the Western paradigm. I will use my own interpretation to evaluate each article as portraying either a positive, negative or neutral overall tone in its portrayal of the

federal-Indigenous government. This allowed a baseline of quantitative data that served as an entry point to more detailed analysis.

Based on a summary of the tenets of Eurasianism as they relate to nationalities in Chapter 2, I constructed a rough prediction of what themes might arise and be highlighted in the Russian news media. I tested the themes for falsifiability by including contra-positives for each code. For example, if one of the codes was *Native Americans' discontent with federal government* I created the corresponding falsified code *Native Americans' satisfaction with federal government*. In addition to the deductive testing, I used an inductive component to the coding process to add certain codes during the data analysis. While there are certainly predictions about the way that Eurasianism would manifest itself in coverage of Indigenous Peoples, the philosophy is broad, and its complexities multiply when applying abstract philosophical ideas to frame real-life events. Some events may easily be categorized within the frame of Eurasianism, while others may be more elusive. This inductive classification allows a more nuanced view of the way that Eurasianism is--or is not--manifested in the data. As Ji Young Cho and Eun-Hee Lee note, a “unique characteristic of qualitative content analysis is the flexibility of using inductive or deductive approaches or a combination of both approaches in data analysis.”²⁰⁴

For *Section 1 Indigenous Russians*, I identified two major themes. The first was:

- *Forces Uniting Eurasia* and includes:
 - *Civilizational unity* which refers to mentions of an ineffable force that unites the diverse communities within Russia;

²⁰⁴ Ji Young Cho and Lee Eun-Hee. “Reducing confusion about grounded theory and qualitative data analysis: similarities and differences.” *The Qualitative Report* 19 no. 32 (August 2014), 4. Accessed on December 2 2018. <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol19/iss32/2>

- *Geographic unity* which refers to Savitsky's notion of a natural symmetry of the Eurasian continent that economically binds diverse peoples;
- *Linguistic unity*, which refers to Trubetskoy's contention that the various language groups have converging features that suggest a common direction; and
- *Spiritual unity*, which refers to either common belief in the Russian Orthodox Church, or more general feelings of spiritual unity.

The second category was *Russian state as a benevolent patriarch to Indigenous Peoples*, arranged to include the subthemes.

- *Russian State as a benevolent patriarch to Indigenous Peoples*
 - *Cultural stewardship* by the Russian government in nurturing the cultures of its Indigenous peoples through government ;
 - *Defense of traditional lifestyles*, referring to protection of subsistence and other forms of cultural expressions;
 - *Economic development*, which refers to both developing traditional and modern economic activities;
 - *Educational development*, which includes traditional forms of education, as well as educational conferences or museum construction;
 - *Protection of environment* on which the Indigenous peoples live;

- *Equitable resolution of territorial disputes*, as opposed to unfair, exploitative resolutions as Russia views those in the United States;
- *Funds granted to Indigenous Peoples* from the federal government for any purpose;
- *Stewardship of Indigenous health*, including expanding health insurance and services;
- *Language stewardship*, referring to government initiatives to preserve Indigenous languages through education or other means;
- *Political empowerment of Indigenous groups*, including the organization of conferences and meetings with federal officials;
- *Improvement of social conditions*” which refers to a wide variety of aid from the federal government to reduce unemployment, homelessness, or social prestige;
- *Special rights or privileges granted to Indigenous groups*, which refers to various government allowances to different Indigenous groups that acknowledge their distinctiveness from the majority culture.

The contrapositive codes were made based on this code list. For example, the counter code for *Russia as a benevolent patriarch to Indigenous Peoples* was coded as *Russia as a malevolent/negligent steward to Indigenous Peoples*.

For the Native American Section of this project, I identified three general framing themes. The first was

- *Native Americans' discontent with the U.S. Government.* This theme takes a variety of forms based largely on Neo-Eurasianist interpretations of the Eurasian mission, which denigrates the West. Subthemes identified in this category include:
 - *Avarice of the West in dealing with Native People* (i.e. how a soulless capitalism drives disrespect for minority groups);
 - *Cultural or spiritual suppression* of Native American groups;
 - *Environmental pollution* or degradation of native lands;
 - *Lack of recognition of legal rights* of Native Americans;
 - Mentions of *Genocide* including “cultural genocide,” and “linguistic genocide”;
 - *Political suppression* or lack of self-government by Native Americans;
Language suppression of Indigenous languages;
 - *Excessive violence* in engaging with Native Americans;
 - *Social problems* including social pathologies such as alcoholism, drug abuse, suicide, depression, as well as hunger, poor healthcare, poverty and unemployment among Native Americans;
 - *Fragmentation of democratic governments* caused by Native Americans pursuing their rights outside of normal national legal avenues, such as

street protests outside of normal legal avenues, lawsuits, and appeals to international organizations;

- *Racism* on the part of the West or Western institutions towards Native American minorities;
- *Territorial disputes* between Native American groups and the U.S. or state governments;
- *Treachery of the U.S. government in Treaties and Contracts* with Native American governments; and
- *Violence towards the U.S. Government* perpetrated by dissatisfied Native Americans. As in the Indigenous Russians Section, I also created a list of contrapositive codes from the Eurasianist codes.

The second theme I identified in Russian media articles about Native Americans was that of *Russia as a benevolent alternative to the West*. Sub themes included:

- *Appeals by Native Americans to Russia* for help in problem solving;
- mentions of the *Inherent egalitarianism of Russian culture* in articles about Native Americans;
- mentions of *Russian interest in Native American culture* with implicit references to Americans' general disinterest in minority cultures;

- mentions of *Eurasians as guardians of natives* in their own country or in their exploration of the Americas;
- *Honesty of Eurasians in treaty or deal-making* with Indigenous Peoples;
- *Interest from Native Americans in a Eurasian model* of political organization;
- *Empowerment of Indigenous language* by Russia;
- *Pacifism of Russia* in its treatment of Indigenous Peoples;
- *Russia as an equitable trading partner* to Indigenous Peoples;
- and *Spiritual development of Indigenous Peoples* by Russia and Orthodox missionaries.

The third major theme comprises the natural *Affinity between Eurasia and American Indians*. This refers to suggestions that Eurasians share one or more characteristics with Native Americans that they do not share with non-Native Americans. Within this category, I identified several sub-themes related to the ways the media express this affinity. These included:

- *Cultural affinities*, or general cultural similarities between various Eurasian groups and Native Americans and based on Trubetskoy's idea of a convergence of cultural markers;
- *Genetic affinities*, or the common genetic origin of Eurasians and Native Americans;

- *Linguistic affinities*, based on Trubetskoy’s linguistically-rooted idea of Eurasia; and
- *Spiritual affinities*, based on the Duginian ideas of the Russian Orthodox Church as a cornerstone of Eurasian identity and Panarin’s suggestion that all civic Russians share a “high degree of spirituality.”

As with previous sections, I created codes for the contrapositives of this list to capture explicit mentions of cultural, genetic, linguistic, or spiritual differences.

I developed these schemata with only preliminary review of the actual content of the articles and without in-depth knowledge of the pressing on-the-ground issues covered in the national media. As such, the results of the study depend on the elaboration of these two schemata into more specific themes to reveal more about how the media portray Indigenous Peoples within Russian society and whether the narratives align with Eurasianist ideology.

4.1.3 Data Source Selection

I selected news outlets based on their reach and diversity within the mainstream public discourse. I evaluated each media outlet’s reach based on available numbers of distribution, and then used these numbers to select five prominent outlets that represented different ideological strains within the Russian media landscape. This decision, of course, was subjective to my own biases and understandings, though I will be able to tease out diverging narratives of the different news outlets (should there be any) after I completed coding. The decision to limit the media sources to five was made to roughly represent some of the different political and economic interests within mainstream Russian discourse, without becoming too bogged down with data. I

determined that the data sources would be limited to print media available online, as television--though it is considered the most consumed and trusted media in Russia--would have to be transcribed, necessarily reducing the quantity of data I could analyze without unlimited means. I also assumed that self-censorship would reduce the variability between print and television journalism, making print an effective stand-in for television. With these considerations, I selected the following news sites, which I refer to as “Kremlin-aligned media.”

1. *Argumenty i Fakty* (Arguments and Facts)--AIF.ru

Argumenty i Fakty has the largest readership of any weekly newspaper in Russia with 6.5 million readers weekly.²⁰⁵ It is also the most popular Russian newspaper outside of Russia with retailers in 60 countries and claims to be one of the top-10 most popular media sites in Russia.²⁰⁶ It was purchased by the Moscow City Government in 2014.

2. *RT*--RT.com

RT, whose role has been described extensively in section 3.3, is a growing network with lots of international and online reach. Its website claims that it receives 50 million unique views monthly (in its five different languages) and its YouTube channel is reportedly the first news channel to receive 1 billion views (which it did in 2013).²⁰⁷ *RT* is one of the Russian government’s tools for public diplomacy and information warfare and its programing is sometimes carefully coordinated with high-level government officials. While its reach is perhaps more

²⁰⁵ “Corporation.” Accessed October 3, 2018 <http://corp.aif.ru/page/4>

²⁰⁶ “Corporation.” Accessed October 3, 2018. <http://corp.aif.ru/page/4>

²⁰⁷ “About.” Accessed October 3, 2018. <https://www.rt.com/about-us/>

significant to English-speaking audiences who were affected by *RT*'s dissemination of "fake news," it also significantly broadcasts to the Russian-speaking diaspora across the world. *RT* thus provides an invaluable perspective on the worldview of the Russian ruling elite.

3. *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (Russian Newspaper)--RG.ru

Rossiyskaya Gazeta is the Russian government's official news outlet. Though often dry, it is invaluable in that it provides an official government line and its origins date back to the early Soviet Union. It has a circulation of 144,000 copies per day and states on its website that "according to polls, most of our readers are even-tempered adults inclined to hold conservative views."²⁰⁸

4. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*--KP.ru

Komsomolskaya Pravda also dates back to the 1920s and is probably the largest daily newspaper in Russia as of 2008, with a daily circulation of 660,000, according to TNS Gallup Media. It was also the most visited website that year. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* was originally founded as a revolutionary, left-wing paper, but has been part of the red-brown (Communist-Fascist) alliance of the post-Soviet era, and has been known to publish radical anti-American views.

5. *TASS*--TASS.ru

TASS is the official Russian news wire service that has been in operation for 114 years.²⁰⁹ *TASS* produces news in English and Russian and has bureaus across the

²⁰⁸ "About." Accessed October 3, 2018. <https://rg.ru/about/>

²⁰⁹ "History." Accessed December 1, 2018. <https://tass.ru/spec/tass-history>

country and the world. Its broad geographical presence across Russia and coverage of diverse, global topics, including American ones, make it useful for our analysis.

In addition to these five “Kremlin aligned media,” I selected two control media outlets to establish a standard with which I could compare coverage.

1. *BBC Russia*--BBC.com/russia

A service of the British Broadcasting Corporation, which despite its biases, can safely be assumed not to have a Eurasianist bias. *BBC Russia* has both translations of English-language articles, as well as original articles written in Russian. *BBC Russia* has a strong focus on the West, which makes it a good source for articles about Native Americans, but is not subject to pressures by the Kremlin as it is owned by the British public, as opposed to being held by private investors with Kremlin ties. Because it had poor coverage of Russian Indigenous people, I substituted *Novaya Gazeta* for it in *Section 1*.

2. *Novaya Gazeta*--Novayagazeta.ru

The strongest independent opposition newspaper in Russia was founded by former Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev in 1993 with the money he earned from the Nobel Peace Prize. It has become a force of opposition to the ruling government despite overt and covert threats to its journalists. It has an average daily print readership of 50,000, according to the National Circulation Service,²¹⁰ and many more online. It is one of the few newspapers in Russia that covers Indigenous Peoples’ issues.

²¹⁰ Natsional’naya tirazhnaya sluzhba. (National Circulation Service.) “Reestr Sertifitsirovannykh Izdaniya” (“Register of Certified Publications.”) October 29, 2018, accessed November 16 2018. <http://pressaudit.ru/reestr/>

4.1.4 Data Collection

I collected data through a Google search between April 15 and May 29 of 2018. I divided the search terms by *Section 1* and *Section 2*.

I conducted *Section 1: Indigenous Russians* in the same way, but using different search terms. The primary search term for this section will be “коренные малочисленные народы севера” (“Small Numbered People of the North”). Hits with missing links or repeated articles will be ignored. Secondary and tertiary search terms which were used in the case that the primary term does not yield sufficient results are “РАЙПОН” (RAIPON), and “Ассоциация коренных малочисленных народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока Российской Федерации” (Association of Indigenous, small numbered people of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation). These terms both refer to the non-profit advocacy organization chartered by the Russian government that has enjoyed varying degrees of autonomy in the past decade. In this manner, over fifty results were collected from the six news outlets (excluding *BBC Russia*).

I decided to use the blanket organization’s term as opposed to individual ethnonyms, due to the focus of this study. Another research design may have included a search of individual ethnonyms--Even, Chukchi, Nenets, Tungus, etc.--but this would have either skewed the focus towards the groups selected or necessitated a larger data pool, which was beyond the constraints of this project. I concluded that since the study’s purpose was to analyze the media’s presentation of the federal-Indigenous relationship, focusing on RAIPON was appropriate, because RAIPON is the primary interface between the federal government in Moscow and the Indigenous peoples spread across Eurasia.

Section 2: Native Americans used the Russian terms for Native Americans, “коренные жители Америки” (“Indigenous residents of American”), “коренные американцы” (“Native Americans”), and “индейцы” (“Indians”). These terms returned thousands of results. Articles were printed and saved as PDF files. One problem encountered was with an inaccurate use of the term “коренные жители Америки” (“Indigenous resident of America”), which was occasionally used in recent years to refer to non-immigrant whites who were dissatisfied with illegal immigrants from Latin America. I decided to discard any results in which the term was used in this definition. The context of these references clarified when they were “false hits.”

In this way about 55 articles were gathered from each of the six (excluding *Novaya Gazeta*) aforementioned news outlets. Though my aim was to acquire 50 articles, I determined that the possibility of finding duplicate articles or “false hits” required additional culling of data during the analysis. For some outlets, 50 results were not found for the first search term “коренные жители Америки” (“Indigenous residents of America”) in which case I used the same procedure to search with the term “коренные американцы” (Native Americans”) and gleaned any previously unsaved articles with relevant use of the term. Except in one case, this yielded enough results. In that case I entered the term “индейцы” (“Indians”), which yielded the goal of 50 relevant results.

4.1.5 Limitations

This study has many limitations, the most primary of which comprises the difficulty in establishing a control to account for what one would expect from a relatively unbiased or independent media outlet without any ideological influence. Damm and Cooley’s analysis of the Russian Orthodox Church, while valuable, did not consider whether the themes they found in

their analysis were in fact more emphasized in Kremlin-aligned versus independent media, and thus they left open the possibility that another narrative was in place, hidden behind the themes they were predisposed to search for. While the use of a control media aims to strengthen the methodology, any control media may be influenced by other internalized narratives or political pressures. *BBC Russia*, the control media for the “Native American Section,” is a service funded by the British government. While some journalists are of foreign origin and may be susceptible to ongoing social or political narratives in their countries of residence, others are Russian and are presumably somewhat influenced by the predominant Eurasianist narrative. Though I attempted to code for this difference, many of the articles had no byline, so the sample size would have been much too small to establish any pattern.

Another limitation of the study concerns data collection. As mentioned previously, the study was limited to written journalism because of the complications of transcribing large amounts of television stories, even though television is the most consumed form of media in Russia. Although I believe that the stories in print generally resemble those broadcast via television, the latter has the added component of images, which could be coded to establish more nuanced themes, as well as more visceral drama. Another potential direction to expand the study would be to consider more media outlets to achieve a broader view of what themes are emphasized. However, just as with coding for television, expanding the scope of media outlets would have expanded the time and resources required for this project. The data collection was also limited by Google’s search algorithm. I selected the Google Site Search tool as opposed to a comprehensive survey of one or more news outlets as a way to limit the data in a way that would emphasize the most influential articles. Of course, whatever method I might use to determine

“influence” of an article will be imperfect. The Google Site Search is subject to the variables of its algorithm, which include the number of sites linked to the original article, prevalence of keywords, and the amount of time that the site has existed. None of these factors explicitly measure how often they were read in Russia, and thus serve as imperfect substitutions for actual influence.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

5.1 Indigenous Russian Section

Despite the prevalence of international reports that find a persistence of human rights abuses, racial discrimination, and poor living conditions,²¹¹ the Kremlin-aligned media paint an overwhelmingly positive portrait of Indigenous-Russian government relations.

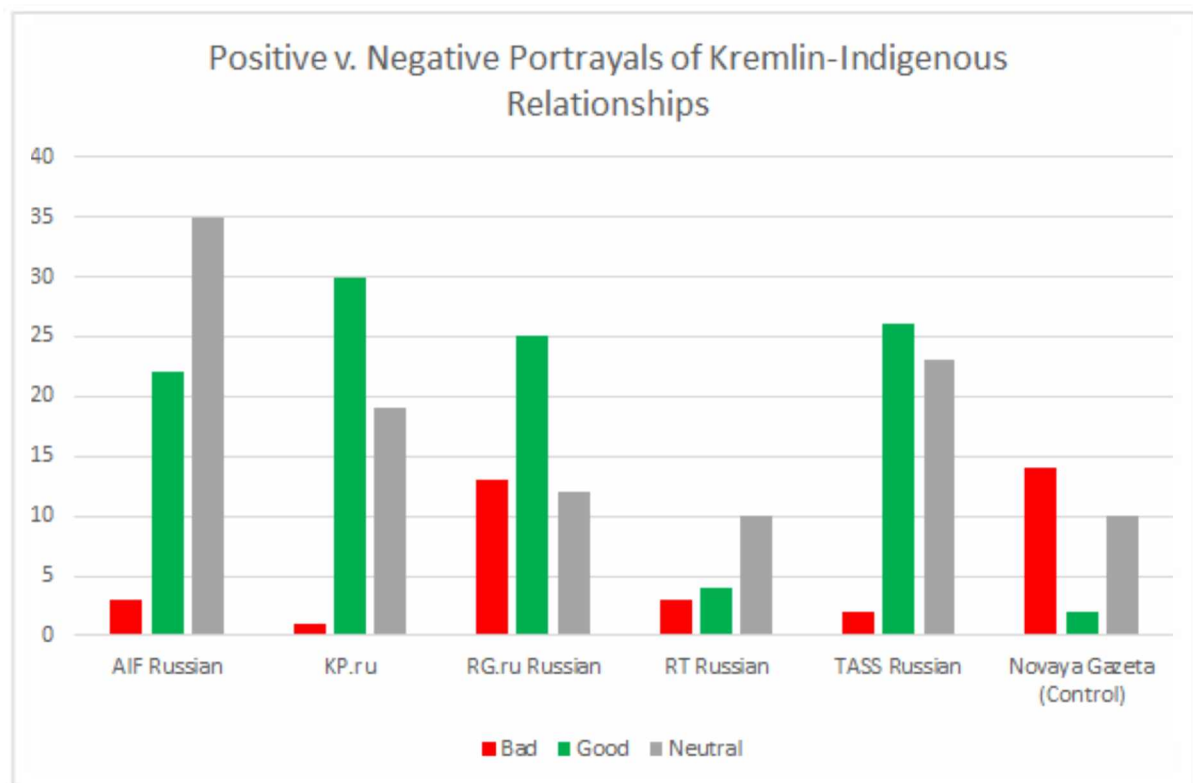


Table 5.1: Positive v. Negative Portrayals of Kremlin-Indigenous Relationships

AIF, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, *RT* and *TASS* all contained a striking dearth of critical representations of the federal-Indigenous relationship, with *Komsomolskaya Pravda*,

²¹¹ For example, see Johannes Rohr. “Indigenous Peoples in the Russian Federation,” or Cultural Survival. “Observations on the State of Indigenous Human Rights in the Russian Federation Prepared for: The 30th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review May 2017.” Accessed October 2018. <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/sites/default/files/UPR-Report-Russian-Federation-2017.pdf>

which is known for its nationalist bias, having a dramatic 1:30 ratio of negative to positive articles in its coverage of Indigenous Peoples. The data collection itself revealed a strange phenomenon of Russia's media coverage by Kremlin-aligned sources: the data collection protocol did not yield fifty news items in *RT*'s reporting. Several factors may explain the disproportionate coverage of Native American stories versus articles addressing Russian government-Indigenous relations. *RT* serves as a tool for public diplomacy for the Russian diaspora living abroad (as well as for non-Russians) as opposed to being directed at citizens living within Russia. Perhaps stories regarding Indigenous-state relations in Russia would not interest its readers. Alternatively, *RT* may avoid mentioning its own people because of a preponderance of human rights abuses of Indigenous peoples within Russia. Perhaps *RT* would struggle to find positive, news-worthy stories regarding its own Indigenous peoples, and thus chooses to emphasize the systematic oppression of Indigenous Peoples in the United States. As Damm and Cooley explain in their narrative analysis of Kremlin-aligned media coverage of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Kremlin cannot manufacture stories from thin air. Instead, they emphasize certain stories, while ignoring those that do not align with their narrative.²¹²

Despite a clear preference for “positive” articles among all of the Kremlin-aligned news sources, the coding scheme identified many articles with a “negative” tone. But many of these articles coded as “negative” tend to offer strange explanations for the negative dynamic between the federal government and Indigenous Peoples. An article in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, for example, details several problems stemming from the elimination of a stamp on the passports of members of officially recognized Indigenous groups. The stamp had historically served as a

²¹² Damm, *Resurrection of the Russian Orthodox Church*, 91.

guarantee for Indigenous peoples to engage in certain subsistence activities from which the general public was barred, but was removed in the 1990s during westernization. However, this led to a spate of bureaucratic dysfunctions, since Indigenous no longer had a document to prove they belonged to the group they claimed, and thus were being denied subsistence rights that were guaranteed in the federal constitution. Following a lengthy interview with a local Indigenous rights advocate in which he extensively explains the problems caused by the elimination of this stamp, the article concludes with strange allusion to separatist movements within Russia.

“... the associate director of the Miklukho-Maklay Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology Vladimir Zorin expressed his discomfort with the ‘separatist feelings’ that in his mind threaten the wholeness of Russia. ‘In contrast to the 1990s, these movements contain not just a purely ethnic character, but a regional-economic one.’ He added that a law is necessary to protect against the propaganda of separatism.”²¹³

The article thus attributes the elimination of the passport seals to separatist agitation, rather than insufficient attention, resources, or protection offered to Indigenous peoples by the Kremlin.

This brings us to a second factor that explains the sometimes negative portrayal of Indigenous peoples and their living conditions: the Eurasianist tenet of the rights of peoples as more valuable than the rights of individuals. The previous excerpt from *Komsomolskaya Pravda* elevates the struggle for survival of the larger *ethnos* of Russia/Eurasia against the threat of separatism, which the article implicitly links with Western forces, above the rights of individual hunters to their ancestral hunting and fishing grounds. Individual natives might be suffering through pangs

²¹³ Igor Morosov. “Malye narody Khabarovskogo kraya prosyat vernut im natsional’nost.” (“Little people of the Khabarovsk Krai ask to have their nationalities returned.”) *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. December 25, 2011. Accessed May 20, 2018. <https://www.hab.kp.ru/daily/25810.5/2789635/>

of hunger, the ravishes of poverty, the cold of winter, or even the loss of subsistence rights, but their doing so will allow their *ethnos* to survive. Recall Gumilev's great insight in the history of Eurasianist thought that a *superethnos* can only come about when the constituent *ethnoi* and *subethnoi*, touched with the supernatural power of *passionarity*, are willing to sacrifice their wellbeing for future glory. Such exclusive emphasis on the *superethnos* may harm them in the short term, but it promises to achieve lasting glory in the form of a great empire. Likewise, journalists writing about the small-numbered people in Russia seem to accept a fair amount of suffering by the Indigenous peoples as part of a larger Eurasian social project, as long as this suffering is not referencing any political tensions.

Many negatively-coded articles reference poor social conditions including the inability to access subsistence resources (n=41), poor economic opportunities for natives (n=40), or insufficient federal funding for native education (n=11). Suggestions of territorial and ethnic fragmentation, on the other hand, are virtually absent from Kremlin-aligned media (n=6). When they appear, they are couched in implicit criticism of the West, as in the previously noted *Komsomolskaya Pravda* article. The article suggests that liberalism, the ruling philosophy of Russia in the 1990s, caused the ethnic and political tensions. Now that liberalism has faded from the mainstream dialogue, the only danger of separatism is from "regional-economic" forces. In other words, ethnic separatism no longer threatens Russia, because its various ethnic groups are now reintegrated into the organic Eurasian state, and it is economics that is driving any sort of fragmentation.

Coverage of Indigenous issues differs strikingly in the control media, *Novaya Gazeta*. Not only do multiple suggestions of animosity between RAIPON and the federal government

(RAIPON is called a “nail in the boot” of the Russian government) appear,²¹⁴ but its reporting includes more explicit suggestions of territorial disunity and secessionist impulses (n=19).²¹⁵ For example, in contrast to the Kremlin-aligned media’s portrayal of rosy festivals of inter-ethnic unity, *Novaya Gazeta* quotes a survey study that finds that “of the 28 countries of Europe, Russia has the lowest level of civil solidarity and mutual (‘horizontal’) trust.”²¹⁶ Even more explicitly, *Novaya Gazeta* attributes the charges of espionage against one Indigenous rights leader of the Pomor people in Northwest Russia to his efforts “to recognize the Pomors as Indigenous small-numbered people of the North, and including their territory under the jurisdiction of international law, which could lead to the fragmentation of the territorial wholeness of Russia.”²¹⁷ Unlike the Kremlin-aligned sources, *Novaya Gazeta* suggests the Russian state is teetering at the edge of disintegration due to secessionism of its native people and their wish for greater protections which they believe they can achieve through intergovernmental bodies or foreign states.

5.1.1 *Civilizational Unity* in media coverage

The Kremlin-aligned news media repeatedly emphasized the Eurasianist theme of *Civilizational unity*. This theme appeared in 15 percent (n=37) of the Kremlin-aligned media outlets, while escaping mention in *Novaya Gazeta*. The theme refers to the Eurasian idea of a wholeness of the diverse civilizations of the Eurasian continent and avoids mention or celebration of an ethnic group’s distinctiveness. *Civilizational unity* refers to the characteristic

²¹⁴ “Narod tol’ko meshaet,” (“The people are just a nuisance,”) *Novaya Gazeta*. November 16, 2012, accessed May 25, 2018. <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2012/11/15/52362-narod-tolko-meshaet-vpervye-ob-etom-zayavleno-otkryto>

²¹⁵ Adjusted for the smaller sample size of the control media, the number is 144.

²¹⁶ “Nevol’niki Obschin.” (“Unwilling of the community.”) *Novaya Gazeta*. March 16, 2011, accessed May 20, 2018.

²¹⁷ “Narod tol’ko meshaet,” (“The people are just a nuisance,”) *Novaya Gazeta*, November 16, 2012

Eurasian idea that despite the diversity of the ethnic groups across the vast Eurasian steppe and boreal taiga, an underlying, naturally occurring force unites these peoples. *Civilizational unity* in the Russian Indigenous context refers to a general feeling of unity, but at the same time suggests that the Russian language plays a uniting role in the cohesion of civilization.

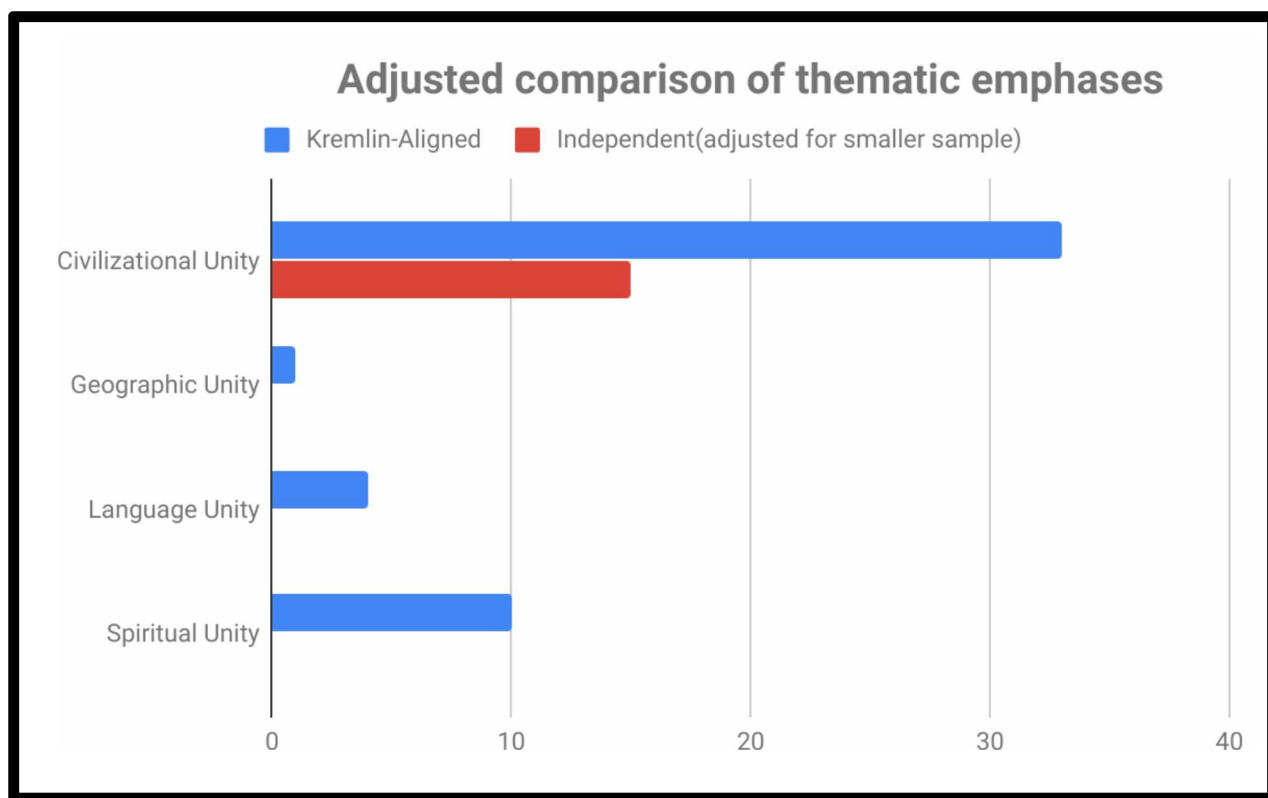


Table 5.2: Sample-size adjusted comparison of thematic emphasis: The chart shows the relative prevalence of the various Eurasianist themes in Kremlin-aligned compared to independent media.

Table 5.2 illustrates the preference for Eurasianist themes among the Kremlin-aligned media, particularly when considered in comparison to the massive preponderance of contrapositive themes in the independent control group. The table also suggests that this somewhat vague notion of “civilizational” unity is the most pervasive justification for the

wholeness of Russia (n=33), followed by mentions of “spiritual” (“dukhovnoe”) (n=10) connections or similarities that unite the people of Russia.

As examples of the celebration of the unity of the Russian civilization, many articles refer to literal celebrations. Russia celebrates the Day of National Unity on November 4, a holiday president Vladimir Putin reestablished by decree in 2005 to replace a memorial of the October Revolution of 1917, thereby symbolically replacing Marxist with Eurasianist ideology. The day in fact originated with a celebration of Russia’s expulsion of Polish and Lithuanian invaders from Moscow in 1612, a mythic foundation of the Russian state akin to July 4th in the United States. Unlike America’s Independence Day, however, Indigenous peoples are clearly woven into the fabric of the Day of National Unity, particularly in Kremlin-aligned media coverage. One article in *TASS* about the holiday quotes Grigorii Ledkov, the current president of the RAIPON, describing the festivities: “Russia is perhaps the most multi-national country in the world. We will celebrate this holiday, devoted to the unity of our people and our country widely.”²¹⁸ In *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, Sergei Kharyuchi, a representative of the legislature of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, asserts that “our strength is in our diversity, not in our uniformity. The unity of the Russia is achieved, among other things, by the balancing of interests of the diverse peoples and ethnoi. On the regional level, this is being reaffirmed.”²¹⁹ An article in *Argumenty i Fakty* quotes the now-exiled former RAIPON leader Pavel Sulyandzinga praising a veteran’s day parade: “My ancestors came from many nationalities: Ukrainians, Ossetians,

²¹⁸ “Predstaviteli korennykh narodov severa shiroko otmetyat Den’ narodnogo edinstva.” (“Representatives of Indigenous peoples of the North widely celebrate the Day of National Unity.”) *TASS*, November 3, 2017, accessed May 20, 2018. Tass.ru/obschestvo/4701838

²¹⁹ “Predsedatel’ Zaksobraniya raskazal o zhizny korennykh narodov Yamala.” (“Legislator talks about the life of the Indigenous people of Yamal.”) *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, July 11, 2013, accessed May 19 2018. rg.ru/2013/07/11/reg-urfo/harjuchi.html

Kazakhs. And all of them considered themselves Russians.”²²⁰ While Sulyandzinga was forced into exile in the United States just months later for protesting a resource development project on Indigenous territory,²²¹ his being cited in this article reaffirms the importance of the small numbered people to the national patriotic identity of Russia. Sulyandzinga is not mentioned again in these Kremlin-aligned media.

Despite these clear assertions of an inherent inter-ethnic unity, however, language plays a more complicated role in the media’s narrative construction. Despite some mentions of linguistic diversity in the Kremlin-aligned media, just as often, the Russian language as playing a uniquely binding role in Russian civilization in a way that can feel patriarchal to Western audiences. In an article about the election of a new president of RAIPON, one bureaucrat notes in a speech that “President Putin has placed enormous emphasis on the realization of rights of Indigenous small-numbered people of the North.” He continues to claim that “he is pleased with the understanding by native people that they are all united by the Russian language.” While paternalistic overtones silence an actual Native voice, the article claims that the elders of several Indigenous groups backed up this assertion, thus legitimating the consensual basis of the Russian state. Another article in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* about a nationwide seminar in Moscow on language preservation again asserts a central role of Russian vis-a-vis other Indigenous languages in Eurasia.

“Language is the foundation of identity, and the Russian language is a powerful instrument in sub-ethnic integration,” the article quotes the chair of the Federal Agency for Nationalities Igor

²²⁰ “Marsh Pamyati” (“Memorial March”) *Argumenty i Fakty*, May 4 2016, accessed May 25 2018. vl.aif.ru/society/marsh_pamyati

²²¹ “Proch’ iz rossii: Zashitnik korennykh narodov...o begstve v sesha’a.” (“Away with you from Russia: Defender of Indigenous people...on his exile to the USA) *BBC Russia*, June 8 2017, accessed November 27 2018. <https://www.BBC.com/russian/features-40194010>

Barinov. “It gives us a chance for a peaceful future, and thus we must develop both Russian as well as the languages of the multi-national Russia.”²²² The Russian media thus emphasizes the importance of Russian at the cost of Indigenous languages despite the previously discussed celebration of the role of the diverse peoples in the creation of a multi-ethnic Russia.

While the disparity between Kremlin-aligned and independent media is not as strong for the code *Spiritual affinities* as it is for *Civilizational unity*, several articles are revealing. They mention and inherent “spiritual unity” (“dukhovnoe edinstvo”) of the ethnically diverse Russian people in a vague sense, as well as the “high level of spirituality” (“vysokaya dukhovnost’”)²²³ that unites the diverse people of Russia. This conforms to Eurasianist notions of Eurasia as a traditional and spiritual society in opposition to the vacuous capitalists of the West. Several articles also celebrate the Russian Orthodox Church and its particular role as a moral beacon for the Russian state. An article in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* entitled “Patriarch says that now is the time for Russia to support the small-numbered people of the North,” explains that during the Patriarch of All-Russia’s visit to a Kamchatkan native village, he called on the federal government to “cherish, nourish, and develop” the “distinct culture, people, and language” there, which is the “greatest treasure.”²²⁴ The article thus places Kirill as a moral advocate and protector for the Indigenous peoples of Russia, a finding that is supported by Damm and Cooley’s narrative analysis of the Russian Orthodox Church.

²²² “Yazyky soglasiya.” (“Languages of agreement.”) *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, October 26 2016, accessed May 20 2018. <https://rg.ru/2016/10/26/reg-cfo/v-moskve-otkrylsia-seminar-po-sohraneniui-iazykov-rossii.html>

²²³ Olga Kuporova. “Na Donu svyshe 700 chelovek napisali «Bol’shoi etnograficheski diktant»” (“On the Don, over 700 people wrote ‘the Great Ethnographic Dictant’”). *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, September 17 2010, accessed May 25, 2018. <https://www.kp.ru/daily/26759/3794793/#print>

²²⁴ Sasha Pyatnitskaya. “Patriarkh: Segodnya takoe vremya, kogda Rossiya dolzhna podderzhivat’ malye narody Severa,” (“Patriarch says that now is the time for Russia to support the small-numbered people of the North.”) *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. September 17, 2010, accessed May 5, 2018. <https://www.kp.ru/online/news/741394/#print>

5.1.2 Dismantling of RAIPON

Perhaps the most significant event in the post-Soviet history of Indigenous peoples and rights was the dismantling of RAIPON from November 1, 2012, until April 20, 2013. Divergent coverage patterns from Kremlin-aligned versus non-Kremlin aligned media reveal much about how Indigenous peoples fit into Russia's civilizational narrative. RAIPON is an umbrella advocacy group that represents 41 Indigenous groups and 250,000 people from across Russia. As a registered Russia-wide social organization, it can submit proposed legislation to the federal assembly. RAIPON is also visible internationally as one of six Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council and has a special consultative status at the Economic and Social Council of the UN.²²⁵

Beginning in 2010, Russian lawmakers began an increasingly obstructionist policy towards RAIPON, which had existed since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. In 2010, the Ministry of Justice launched an audit of RAIPON's non-compliance with federal legislation for its failure to register its logo and what it saw as insufficient registration of its regional branches. Russian law requires that every "national organization" have a certain number of regional offices in a certain number of Russia's federal subjects (oblasts, republics, and okrugs). The Ministry of Justice claimed that RAIPON had not properly listed the locations of its regional offices in its charter, despite the fact that the most recent review in 2005 had found no such issue. Despite not having a meeting scheduled for several years, RAIPON convened a special congress with

²²⁵ "Obshaya informatsiya ob korennykh malochislennyykh narodov severa, Sibirii, i dal'nego vostoka Rossiiskoi Federatsii," (General information on the Association of Indigenous, small-numbered people of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation.") Accessed November 28 2018. <http://www.raipon.info/about/>

representatives from across the country to remedy the problems so that it could continue its work, which it accomplished in mid-2012. Subsequently, however, the Ministry of Justice asserted that the meeting had not followed proper minute-taking protocol, and in November 2012 an official suspended RAIPON's activities, preventing it from meeting and proposing legislation to the federal Duma. Dismissing these trivial assertions of legal non-compliance, Indigenous advocates asserted that the underlying reason for the feud lay in disputes over territorial and subsistence rights between developers and Indigenous collectives, according to activists working for RAIPON. These activists, apparently, had been critical of the former Deputy of the Regional Development Ministry, Maxim Travnikov, for failing to implement federal protections of Indigenous Peoples when he was responsible for implementing these rights from 2008 until 2012. Just one month after Travnikov was promoted to Deputy Minister of Justice in September 2012, he disbanded RAIPON, in retaliation against his former critics.²²⁶

The opposition newspaper and the control media for this study, *Novaya Gazeta*, covered the suspension of RAIPON in a way that was very critical of the Kremlin. In an article from October 31 just after the suspension of the organization, *Novaya Gazeta* claimed that RAIPON had always been a “nail in the boot of the Russian business-government partnership.” The article claimed that in the present climate, any non-profit organization operating in Russia needs, “if not love for the Kremlin, then at least unbounded loyalty.” The article quoted Vice President of RAIPON Rodion Sulyandziga saying, “Indigenous peoples are one of the last barriers on the path of corporations and governments in the acquisition of these resources, and it is easier for

²²⁶ Dimitry Berezhkov. “The study of the Indigenous peoples’ participation in decision making in Russia Federation.” Center of Northern People: 2002. Annex E: 29-30.

them to make use of force, using the electoral justice, so that they don't divert unnecessary energy, time, and resources in dialogue with those Indigenous."²²⁷ In essence, the article painted an adversarial relationship between the Indigenous Peoples and the federal government (whom it equated with the oil companies), in which the latter disregard human rights in their avarice for more and more resources. The article suggested that the federal government was in alliance with the rapacious oil companies in a mutually enriching scheme that would give the unholy alliance unfettered reign over the mineral resources that once belonged to the Natives.

When RAIPON was re-established in March of 2013, a *Novaya Gazeta* story developed this theme further and suggested that not only the federal government, but the general Russian public was largely ignorant of and unconcerned with the plight of Indigenous peoples in its own country. "What is happening in the majority of the territory of our country--in the Asiatic part, as well as the European North--is at the periphery of attention,"²²⁸ the author claimed. In other words, according to *Novaya Gazeta*'s narrative about the event, the entire fiasco was made possible by the fact that Russians are in fact *not* concerned with Indigenous peoples, but instead are busy ogling the West's riches. The article also states that the "conservation of this fragile, boreal environment and the equally fragile--at least in contrast with the oil companies--ethnicities have few in Russia who will protect them. RAIPON is one of these few."²²⁹ Again, this suggestion belies Eurasianists' vision of Russia as a natural protector of minority ethnicities and that this protector-protected relationship is an integral part of the Russian/Eurasian state.

²²⁷ Andrei Tarasov. "Narod tol'ko meshaet."

²²⁸ Andrei Tarasov. "Korrenye Interesy," ("Native interests,") *Novaya Gazeta*, March 17, 2013, accessed May 15, 2018.

²²⁹ Tarasov. "Korrenye Interesy," *Novaya Gazeta*.

The Kremlin-aligned media responded to the dismantling of RAIPON differently: they ignored it almost completely. Of the 228 articles coded from the Kremlin-aligned media, only one covered the suspension of RAIPON. That article, dated on November 14, 2012, was gleaned from a search of RT following the data collection protocols, but appeared in the InoTV section of RT, which publishes summaries of foreign news related to Russia in Russian. In this case, the story, taken from a *Barents Observer* article, quoted a Norwegian official as describing the Ministry of Justice's act as the "silencing of an 'entire political voice' and its ability to resolve questions on a federal level." The Norwegian official described the act as "the next blow to the non-profit non-governmental organizations" that will affect relations between Russia and Norway. Despite its coverage of the event, the tone it takes towards the *Barents Observer* article makes this article the exception that proves the rule. While it acknowledged that RAIPON was shuttered, it sidestepped the official rationale and implied that the suspension related to RAIPON's foreign contacts. The InoTV summary of the article writes that, "In the opinion of observers in the Norwegian press, this step can be seen as the next blow to the non-profit, non-governmental organizations, but on the other hand, it is unclear which factors--alongside the officially stated reasons, could darken the relationships between the government and RAIPON." This statement, combined with an earlier one that RAIPON "supported official contacts with the Norwegian Barents secretariat and played a key role in the cooperation between the Indigenous peoples and other countries in the Arctic," seems to feed on a hysteria at the time in Russia concerning "foreign agents." While RAIPON was never officially accused of being a foreign agent, the open-ended statements in this InoTV article seem to invite the readers to connect the dots. Notice the suggestion that RAIPON is cooperating with "other countries in the Arctic," not

with other Indigenous organizations. This simple manipulation of words perhaps serves as a dog-whistle for a Russian, xenophobic anti-American readership, who would read “NATO” into “other countries in the Arctic.” The readership may thus perceive RAIPON as a front for a Western-supported information warfare type operation, rather than a representative body of the Eurasian *subethnoi*.

When the government reinstated RAIPON, its former leader, Pavel Sulyandzinga, was ousted in favor of a more obsequious president, Grigorii Ledkov, at an official RAIPON meeting. According to Thomas Nilson,²³⁰ a reporter for the Barents Observer out of Kirkenes, Norway, Pavel Sulyandzinga, who had a history of vocal opposition to resource development projects on Indigenous land, won the first two rounds of voting for a new president decisively. However, after a closed-door meeting with Russian officials before the last round of voting, Sulyandzinga emerged and announced the withdrawal of his candidacy amidst cries of disapproval by delegates.²³¹ If the episode was a test of whether an independent Indigenous people’s organization could exist within the framework of a centralized, economically-oriented Kremlin, the Putin regime certainly failed. Indigenous people’s concerns were relegated to the voice of a Kremlin-appointed puppet who could advocate for Indigenous interests, but would not stand up to the Putin regime in a meaningful way. Western observers suggested that, despite its public kowtowing to international standards of respect towards Indigenous peoples, the Kremlin showed that it held no such respect for Indigenous Peoples as independent voices in civil society.

²³⁰ Nilson was denied further entry into Russia as of March 2017. Amy Martin. “An environmental newspaper fights for press freedom in the Russian arctic,” *The World*, November 26 2018. Accessed November 27, 2018. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-11-26/environmental-newspaper-fights-press-freedom-russian-arctic>

²³¹ Thomas Nilson. “Moscow Staged Raipon election thriller,” *Barents Observer*. April 3, 2013. Accessed October 25, 2018. <https://arcticconsulteng.wordpress.com/2018/04/24/2013-04-barents-observer-moscow-staged-raipon-election-thriller/>

The Kremlin-aligned media's silence throughout the campaign illustrates the incongruity of the episode with a Eurasianist vision of the relationship between the federal government and minority peoples of Russia. Instead of reporting on it and demonizing RAIPON or Indigenous peoples, the Kremlin-aligned media chose to ignore the event entirely, and by doing so reaffirm that there was no political tensions between the federal government and Indigenous groups. Unlike some of the critical stories represented in the Kremlin-aligned media regarding challenging social or economic conditions among Natives, the story of the federal government forcibly silencing Native peoples contradicts assertions of natural, organic unity between the ethnicities of Eurasia; thus the Kremlin-aligned media ignored it.

5.2 Native American Section

5.2.1 Media portrayal of Native Americans

While Kremlin-aligned media coverage of Russian Indigenous Peoples' relationship with the federal government examined for this research project was largely positive, the coverage of the relationship between the U.S. government and Native Americans was strikingly negative. As shown below negative media portrayals far outnumbered positive portrayals across media outlets. This is unsurprising, considering the decades-old geopolitical and ideological animosity between the Soviet Union/Russia and the U.S.

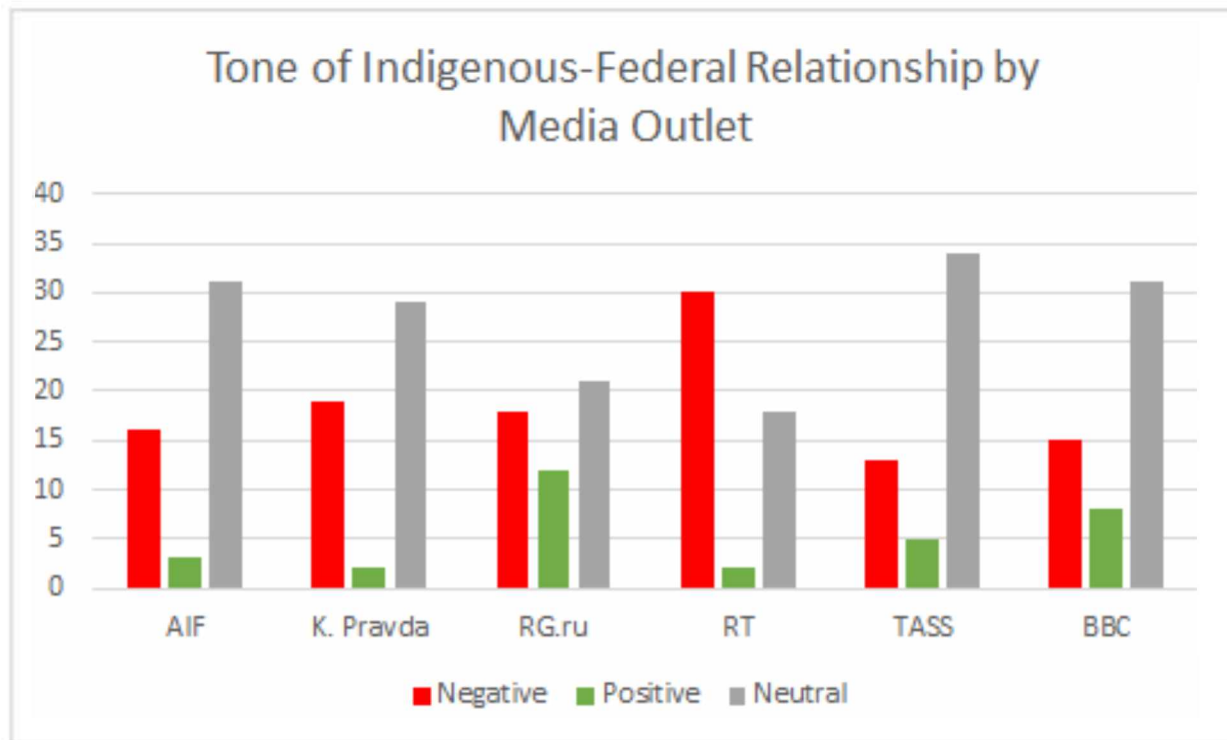


Table 5.3: Tone of Indigenous-Federal Relationship by Media Outlet in the United States

In general, all the media outlets provided more coverage of stories that portrayed Native Americans and Alaska Natives as having a fraught and contentious relationship with the U.S. federal government than those that portrayed a conciliatory or amicable relationship. *RT* coverage contains the most striking disparity, with thirty stories that I evaluated as portraying a negative Federal-Indigenous relationship, and only one story that could be considered positive. The tone of the single exception was in fact ambiguous and otherwise anomalous among the data collected. The short article, titled “Barack Obama restores the historic name of the highest peak in North America,” has no accompanying image and contains a glaring typographical error. After briefly describing the history of Mount McKinley and Alaska, the story says, “the event takes place as part of a three-day visit to Alaska by the American leader, on which he hopes to fix and strengthen [sic] with the local people.” This omission of a noun in Russian occurs at the end of

the sentence, suggesting that a careless author or editor removed the words “his relationship” with the local people. Was this an honest mistake or was it a form of parapraxis, wherein the author cannot bring him/herself to recognize a *relationship* between locals and the federal government can be improved? In either case, the shortened sentence eliminates the prospect of a brighter future of the relationship between the federal government and Alaska Natives. While the story was coded as positive, because it addresses the restoration of the original Indigenous name to the landmark, it could have been coded as negative, given the suggestion that local (or Indigenous) people’s relationship with the federal government was in a state of disrepair and needed to be fixed. The article also mentions a “forty-year battle” between the state and the federal government, suggesting that if the federal-Indigenous relationship is not poor, then at least the federal-state one is. Two articles from *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* about the renaming of Mt. McKinley were also rated as “positive,” though they also both refer to a “battle” (“*bor’ba*”) between the federal and state governments, a choice of verbiage that suggests a contentious history, if not future.

Articles in other outlets that were coded as “positive” are likewise often ambiguous. For example, one article in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* is entitled “Attorney General of the U.S. calls voter rights for natives ‘horrendous.’” While the article depicts a conciliatory federal government attempting to correct a human rights violation, it also contained many references to the poor condition of Native Americans with respect to their civil rights. Another *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* article entitled “Obama appoints lesbian to federal court,” contains a passing reference to two Native Americans serving in Obama’s cabinet. The article states that Obama has been a leader in appointing minorities to high-level positions, but the reference also could be interpreted by the

cynical reader as portraying a “negative” tone of the federal-Indigenous relationship because it shows how few minorities are in the cabinet and that even fewer were in the cabinet previously. Another subcategory of the “positive”-rated articles addresses American-Russian cooperation at Fort Ross, a former Russian colony on the coast of California that has been much publicized in the Russian media during the bicentennial of its founding in 1812. *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* quotes the leader of the Society for the Preservation of Fort Ross as saying, “This place holds huge emotional meaning--there’s an Orthodox temple, and that strengthens their [Russian expats’] spiritual connection with Russia.” While the article portrays Americans generously in their interactions with Kashai Indians, it also emphasizes Russia’s lasting spiritual connection to the shores of North America. The quantitative portion of this analysis fails to capture relatively frequently occurring negative or ironic undertones in the articles.

While the control media, *BBC Russia*, contained a similar ratio of negative to positive stories (it had fewer negative stories than all but *TASS*), a different research protocol could have yielded a different result, since four of the sixteen articles coded as portraying a “negative” tone referred to Canada. If the data collection protocol had been established such that articles referring to Canada were omitted, the ratio would have been eleven negative to eight positive. *TASS* and other Kremlin-aligned media published almost no stories related to Canada. Given the perception of the United States as a more quintessential representative of Western corruption, the research design could have been improved by omitting Canada-related articles. Nonetheless, the data from *BBC Russia* is valuable in that it illustrates that Canada escapes the most critical coverage of federal-Indigenous relationships in both Kremlin-aligned media and in independent media. I can posit two explanations for this phenomenon. The first is that Russia does not

perceive Canada as the grand geopolitical enemy that the United States is, and it thus falls outside Russian media's grand, polarized narrative of a clash between East and West. Due to Canada's more submissive foreign policy to Russia, as well as Canada and Russia's mutual geopolitical interests in the Arctic, Canada does not embody the antipodal civilization to Eurasia that the United States and Great Britain do in the Russian imagination. A second explanation, however, could be that Russian media publish more positive stories of the Canadian federal-Indigenous relationship because Canada has been more progressive in correcting and reconciling historical wrongs among its Indigenous population in recent years. Particularly since 2008 with the official apology to its First Nations for their treatment in the residential school system and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Canada has publicly portrayed itself as a leader in protecting Indigenous rights. This explanation suggests that the general omission of news related to the Canadian-Indigenous relationship is a function of the Kremlin-aligned media's curation of stories that align with political narrative Moscow formulates, rather than the fabrication of stories.

Kremlin-aligned media thus overwhelmingly cover the U.S. federal-Indigenous relationship in negative terms, while those few that are positive are undermined by subtle choices in diction. Overall, this conclusion suggests a continuation of the Soviet-era ideology that suggests that minority groups in the U.S. are oppressed by the political structures of capitalism and democracy. This is not altogether surprising, but reaffirms the contention that the current Russian media landscape has ideological biases that predispose it to negative portrayals of the U.S. government's treatment of Indigenous Peoples and other minorities. The nuances of these

negative portrayals, however, have changed substantially as the ruling ideology has shifted from Marxism to Eurasianism.

5.2.2 American/Western fitness for Indigenous governance

What themes *are* emphasized in these negative portrayals of the federal-Indigenous relationship? The themes are wide-ranging, but fit into the general criticisms of the West inherent in Eurasianism.

One common point that the Russian media repeats is the allusion to the historic loss population decline of Native Americans, which the media often refer to as “genocide.” While it is sometimes referred to only implicitly, it nonetheless plays a grounding role in many of the historical references when referring to Native Americans (n=56), and is wielded as a trump card for framing any comparisons. Before discussing the coverage of genocide, it is worth looking at our control media outlet, *BBC Russia*. While *BBC Russia* mentioned genocide several times (n=7 in 3 of the 50 articles or 6 percent), that news outlets’ coverage about genocide differed significantly in tone, which points to limitations of my quantitative research method. Among the seven references to *genocide* in *BBC Russia*, three of the mentions concern Spanish colonizers--a nationality that does not embody “the West” as directly as the U.S. or Great Britain in the Eurasian imagination. Another mention in *BBC Russia* is ambiguous as to the agent of the genocide in referring to a population drop among Aleuts on the Aleutian Islands. “Today, there are only 3,800 Aleuts in all of Alaska and the Aleutian Chain,”²³² a statement that does not accuse either side as the agent of responsibility for the population loss. Other articles in *BBC*

²³² “Amerikanski Ostrov, Kotorii kogda-to byl russkim” (“American Island that once was Russian.”) *BBC Russia*, August 4, 2018, accessed October 20, 2018. [BBC.com/russian/vert-tra-45021763](https://www.bbc.com/russian/vert-tra-45021763)

Russia only obliquely reference a Native American genocide. For example, one article states that “The population of Indigenous peoples in North America, which represent several exclusive groups, began to decrease after the arrival of immigrants, and now accounts for a minority of the population.”²³³ The most direct assertion of responsibility comes for a *BBC Russia* in the statement that “white people brought with them an array of diseases, among them smallpox, to which the Indians had no immunity.”²³⁴ The quote appears in an article about the canonization of a Native American woman, which generally portrayed very positively the relationship between the Anglo-Saxon colonizers and Native Americans. *BBC Russia*, while acknowledging the demographic facts of Native American population decline, usually obfuscates the group who bears responsibility.

Kremlin-aligned media sources take a much different tone when speaking of genocide, implying it was purposeful and malevolent, or at least an inevitable consequence of a capitalistic worldview. Israel Shamir outlines America’s culpability in the annihilation of Native Americans explicitly in an opinion piece in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.

The Russian approach to the small-numbered people was not at all the same as the Americans’--they were given the opportunity to build their own national culture, to preserve their language, and at the same time use all of the achievements of civilization. Russia never knew the monstrous genocide like America, and the local leaders were included in the imperial aristocracy. Some historians and sociologists doubt the wisdom

²³³ “USA: Kratkaya Spravka” (“USA: Quick overview”) *BBC Russia*. September 18, 2009, Accessed May 20, 2018. BBC.com/russian/international/2009/09/090918_in_depth_usa

²³⁴ “U Amerikanskikh indeitsev poyavitsya pervaya svyataya.” (“Among Americans indians there will be a first Saint”). *BBC Russian*, October 20, 2012, accessed October 21, 2018.

of this approach, saying that it would be better to impose a forceful “Russification” on the population. But it’s not worth being ashamed of our benevolent actions, and today, Russia can support the demands of the Sioux Indians for their independence with a clear conscience.²³⁵

Shamir explicitly counterposes America’s genocidal treatment of its Indigenous peoples during colonization to Russia’s magnanimity during colonization in the 17th and 18th centuries and lasting until present. His comparative depiction of the treatment of the two continents’ Indigenous Peoples thus illustrates one of the key differences in the way in which Russia’s Eurasianists narrative contrasts Russian and American civilization. Shamir and other Eurasianists depict Russia as a country that presently and historically has been supportive of the development of Indigenous cultures, which is evidenced by the fact that, according to Shamir, no group of people in Russia has been exterminated.²³⁶ The conquest of Siberia itself in the 16th century by a group of Cossacks led by Yermak Timofeevich was far from peaceful, and in both Russia and America most historians believe that much of the loss of life resulted from diseases that preceded the arrival of the conquerors.²³⁷ Likewise, the status of Indigenous languages is perilous, despite Shamir’s comments. According to the 2010 Census, in about thirty of the forty one groups of small numbered people, less than a quarter of the populations claim language fluency, and six of

²³⁵ Israil Shamir. “Lavrov, Priznai Lakotu!” (“Lavrov, recognize the Lakotah!”). *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, October 3, 2012, accessed October 20, 2018. <https://www.kp.ru/daily/25960/2900248/>

²³⁶ In fact, it is difficult to say whether groups were eliminated because of the complicated evolution of ethnography in tsarist Russia and later in the Soviet Union

²³⁷ It is estimated that up to 80% of some native populations may have been killed by smallpox and other diseases carried by the invading Cossacks; Despite numerous mentions in Russian media of about the culpability of Westerners in the for the genocide of Native Americans due to disease, the topic of a Russian genocide is categorically omitted from any media accounts.

those groups claim native-language fluency of less than one percent.²³⁸ James Forsythe, the author of the definitive *History of the Peoples of Siberia*, writes that “the Soviet Union’s treatment of the natives of the North is comparable with the annihilation of the North American Indians by the white man,”²³⁹ though some of the circumstances differed. Forsythe describes a colonization of Siberia led by greedy and cruel explorers who disregarded any orders from Moscow to treat the native inhabitants with respect. Using many of the tactics later adopted by the Americans, such as purposeful inebriation of the natives and mistranslation of treaties, Russia conquered the vast lands all the way to the Pacific coast in a relatively short time.

While Forsythe equates American and Russian subjugation of native people, Shamir calls the former a “monstrous genocide,” he suggests the latter as inclusive and egalitarian. Shamir suggests that America’s maltreatment of Native Americans is out of the ordinary, describing intentional, malevolent genocide. A debate continues within the United States about the nature of the American conquest and the appropriateness of calling it a genocide, but Shamir’s depiction of American history seems to be taken for granted within Russia. Indeed, several articles analyzed for this project describe an ongoing project to build a memorial to the Native American genocide opposite the American embassy in Moscow in response to a Russian project to memorialize murdered Russian dissident Sergei Magnitsky. On the other hand, the Kremlin-aligned media offer no discussion of a parallel genocide during the conquest of Siberia, despite the similar tactics and outcomes.²⁴⁰ Forsythe writes that it was not until *glasnost* that the

²³⁸ “Vladenie yazikami naseleniem korennykh malochislennykh narodov Rossiyskoi Federatsii.” (“Fluency of language of Indigenous, small-numbered people of the Russian Federation,”) Russian Census 2010. 2120-2031. Accessed October 26, 2018. https://www.iwgia.org/images/publications/0695_HumanRights_report_18_Russia.pdf

²³⁹ Forsyth, *History of the Peoples of Siberia*, 398.

²⁴⁰ Forsyth, *History*, xvi-xvii

optimistic picture of the assimilation of Siberian natives was overturned, at least by Western scholars,²⁴¹ but Shamir's article reveals how the Eurasianist narrative in the twenty-first century has adopted the old Soviet propaganda designed to demonstrate the superiority of the Soviet economic model.

Shamir's statement that "local leaders were included in the imperial aristocracy" is also telling as it implies an egalitarian mindset of the Imperial conquerors. While Eurasianist writers hold contradictory views about the Imperial period of Russia -- some deriding it as a time that Russia was ruled by Western puppets who nefariously overturned true Eurasianist values, while others imply a utopian paradise of traditionalism -- Shamir implies an organic spiritual-political unity between the small-numbered peoples and the ruling aristocracy. Russia can thus, according to Shamir, demonstrate concern for its own native people, while holding its head high in defense of oppressed Indigenous peoples in other parts of the world. In the last sentence of the quoted passage, Shamir alludes to a movement that began in 2008 and led by Native American activist Russell Means for the Dakota nation to declare independence from the U.S. with the land it had been guaranteed in treaties. Shamir writes that "Russia can support the demands of the Sioux Indians for their independence with a clear conscience," and suggests that Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov should offer geopolitical protection to the Lakota Sioux people through official recognition of their secession from the United States.

TASS presents this image of Russia as a benevolent protector of Indigenous peoples around the world even more poignantly in a news article about a call for self-determination made by a joint Alaskan and Hawaiian working group at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

²⁴¹ Forsyth, *History*

According to the article, representatives asked the UN Human Rights Council to review the “illegal annexation” of Alaska, which, according Ronald Barnes, a Yupik Indigenous rights advocate who submitted the petition, was enacted following an insufficiently translated statehood referendum in 1959 that disenfranchised speakers of Alaska Native languages. While the first half of the article can be read as a straightforward denigration of American imperialism, the second half makes a strange non sequitur, beginning with an emboldened section header:

Residents of Alaska use Russian words to this day

In an interview with a *TASS* correspondent, Barnes emphasized that Alaska and Russia have a lot of history, culture, and religion that ties them together. “I am Orthodox,” he said in Russian. Continuing in English, he informed that many of his relatives have Russian last names and use Russian words such as “platok” and “maslo.” “We think that Russians can help us,” said Barnes, “In 2017 we will have the 150th anniversary of the sale of Alaska from Russia to the U.S. Working with the Russians, if we could present the truth about what really happened in history and overturn the corrupted concepts of Alaska and our people, I think that this would be a good way to remedy the situation.” In the opinion of Barnes, Alaska could become a ‘neutral territory’ located in between Alaska and Russia.”²⁴²

The transition in topic from the representatives’ goals in the UN to an explanation of the cultural connections of Alaska and Russia confounds the Western reader. What, after all, does the fact that many Alaska Native languages use Russian words have to do with a petition at the UN

²⁴² “Representatives of Alaska and Hawaii ask the UN to support their rights to self-determination,” *TASS*, May 7 2015, accessed May 20 2018. <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/195529>

Human Rights Council? The subtext seems clear: Russia can offer political support for the Alaskans' push for independence, and independence is a sort of alliance with Russia by virtue of Alaska's historical association with Russia. Alaska's secession, to the Eurasianist reading, is implied to be an implicit vindication of Eurasian expansionism. Of course, no evidence exists to suggest that Alaska would have any interest in re-joining Russia, but the construction of many of these articles seems to suggest such an interest. Nonetheless, innuendos about secession and reunification with Russia appear in articles across the Russian-speaking internet with such incendiary article titles as "The Spirit of Separatism grabs Alaska and Hawaii" (Riafan.ru), "The U.S.A may lose two states" (Obozrevatel.ua, Ukraine), and "Alaska and Hawaii want to live separately" (Tengrinews.kz Kazakhstan), many of them suggesting affinity between Alaska and Russia. *BBC Russia* did not cover the petition, nor did virtually any western media.



Figure 5.1 Illustration included on EurAsia Daily article about Alaska and Hawaii activists' petition for UN recognition of illegal occupation of their territories showing a Native hugging an Orthodox Priest²⁴³

Despite the contrivance of the pro-Russian aspect of this story, the article nonetheless illustrates the manner that Russia can, through its media, incite outrage at injustices and stoke support for its Eurasianist narrative. While Alaska Natives have expressed no credible desire to rejoin

²⁴³ . Representatives of aboriginals of Alaska and Hawaii address the UN on the topic of the 'occupation by the US.'" *Eurasia Daily*, May 8, 2015, accessed November 18 2018. <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2015/05/08/predstaviteli-aborigenov-alyaski-i-gavayev-obratilis-v-onn-po-povodu-ih-okkupacii-ssha>

Russia, many express dissatisfaction with their historical and/or current status within the American federal system, related to violation of treaty rights, historical voter disenfranchisement, and spotty recognition of legal status, among other legitimate issues. Russia’s media portrayal of these sentiments thus perverts actual dissatisfaction to create an imaginary feeling of political affinity with Russia, with no evidence to support that contention.

This aspect of the Kremlin-aligned media coverage of Native Americans is illustrated even more vividly under the coding section *Affinities between Native Americans and Eurasians*.

Theme	Occurrence in Kremlin-aligned	Occurrence in control	Occurrence in control adjusted for smaller sample	Relative Likelihood of mention in Kremlin-aligned vs. Control
General Affinities	13	1	5	61.54%
Cultural	31	1	5	83.87%
Genetic	47	0	0	100.00%
Linguistic	8	0	0	100.00%
Spiritual	20	3	15	25.00%

Table 5.4: Affinities between Native Americans and Eurasians

The most widespread overall affinity or similarity was coded for “Genetic” similarities. While this might seem like a surprising tactic to take in order to prove some sort of affinity between people of Eurasia and the original inhabitants of America, it tells much about the nature of the Eurasianist ideological worldview and the Russian media’s role in perpetuating it. The articles coded for containing mentions of *Genetic* similarities all refer to a scientific study that suggested the ancestors of Native Americans were in Siberia, based on a DNA analysis. This is, of course, an objective, non-ideological scientific fact based on genetic analysis that does not necessarily suggest any sort of agenda. Interestingly, the original press release from the University of

Pennsylvania focuses on the link to *Asia*, not to *Siberia*.²⁴⁴ Even more notable, however, is the great attention paid to this single study. Four individual media articles refer to the genetic origin of Native Americans in *Argumenty i Fakty* alone, and five in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. In contrast, the articles in *BBC Russia* offered no coverage of this scientific study, although *BBC Russia* reported on other genetic studies about the populating of the Americas. This contrast between the independent and Kremlin-aligned media suggests that the story fell within the ideological narrative that the Kremlin promoted, i.e. Eurasianism, and thus was given inordinate airtime.

Exactly why Kremlin-aligned media judged this study to further the Eurasianist narrative is unclear. On one hand, Eurasianism asserts that the Eurasian continent itself holds the key to understanding Russian civilization, through its geology, economy, and cultural union or *superethnos*. The emphasis on this “genetic” expansionism of the Eurasianist idea is best explained by Aleksandr Dugin and his geopolitical expansionism. Dugin asserted that Eurasia is destined to expand its territory and to manifest its greatness through the acquisition and administration of territory. While the West tends to perceive Russia as a backwards country owing to its relatively anemic economy and illiberal political culture, Dugin and neo-Eurasians assert that these measures of success are Euro-centric. Neo-Eurasianists assert that territory, rather than GDP, marks success. By this measure, Russia is the greatest country in the world, since it has the largest territory. Yet Dugin nonetheless calls for continued expansion, first and foremost into Ukraine. But while geographic expansion is the most visible and therefore most

²⁴⁴ University of Pennsylvania. “Anthropologists clarify link between Asians and Native Americans.” January 26 2012, accessed December 3 2018. <https://phys.org/news/2012-01-genetic-footprints-africa.html>

malignant in the eyes of the West, it is also the least promising form of expansion, since there are few geographic locations with similar characteristics to Crimea, i.e. a majority population of Russians, historical ties to Russia, and a relatively weak government without NATO backing. Without substantial geographic potential for expansion, Russia must expand its influence in other ways.

Recall the neo-Eurasianists' advocacy of an information war as the next, primary battlefield in the modern era. Expansionism, by this understanding, can and does occur on an imaginary or psychological plain. The most publicized example of this is the 2009 North Pole expedition in which Russian scientists planted a flag on the seafloor of the central Arctic Ocean. While the exact motives or implications of this move were unclear, most scholars think that move aimed more at its internal audiences as a tool to stoke up patriotism, rather than foreign audiences, in an assertion of colonial ownership in the manner of Christopher Columbus in 1492. Russian officials denied that it had any sovereignty claims to the North Pole other than what was determined by the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, the international commission charged with resolving maritime territorial disputes, and reiterated to international audiences that their claim should not be considered a true territorial claim, just as the USA's flag-planting on the moon should not be considered a claim of territorial ownership. Despite harsh rebukes by other members of the Arctic Council on the flag planting stunt, Russia appears to be continuing its policy of Arctic cooperation by abiding with the rules of the Law of the Sea for determining the limits of its continental shelf, while playing to its irredentist impulses of its domestic population.

Opportunities to claim territory, symbolically, however, are rare, and Russia thus uses other mechanisms for imaginary expansionism, which broadens the perceived reach of the Eurasianist idea without physically expanding it. While the media perpetuates this imaginary expansionism, it is just one of the means within a broader Russian campaign. The “Russkiy Mir Foundation” also furthers this goal. By playing on the double meaning of “Mir” in Russian, which means both “peace” and “world,” the Kremlin-funded foundation seeks to spread recognition of Russian history and culture by “refocusing of attention on the importance and value of the Russian world, and not only to those who consider themselves participants of this world but also to modern civilization at large.”²⁴⁵ This agency, with a budget of 500 million rubles, has sixty five centers worldwide, including three in the United States which it uses to host cultural events and educational programs.²⁴⁶ The Russkiy Mir Foundation collaborates with the Russian Orthodox Church in promoting Russian culture.²⁴⁷ Another mechanism for imaginary expansion is Russia’s information strategy based on the principles outlined in its *National Security Concept* that emphasizes Russia’s duty to its compatriots living abroad (Part II Section 8 2015). The so-called *Compatriots Policy*, which asserts that Russia had a right and an obligation to protect its Russian-speaking citizens outside its borders, has also allocated money for resettlement of Russian citizens back to Russia. Apparently, very few Russians accepted this offer, perhaps because the population that Russia deems its compatriots “often don’t like the term and want nothing to do with the Kremlin’s political project, or are at least ambivalent

²⁴⁵ “About” *Russkiy Mir*. Accessed October 20, 2018. <https://russkiymir.ru/en/fund/index.php>

²⁴⁶ “About” *Russkiy Mir*. Accessed October 20, 2018. <https://russkiymir.ru/en/fund/index.php>

²⁴⁷ “About” *Russkiy Mir*. Accessed October 20, 2018. <https://russkiymir.ru/en/fund/index.php>

towards it.”²⁴⁸ Russian expatriates often left Russia owing to unhappiness with Russia’s feeble economy and its militant chauvinism. Despite promises of monetary support, apparently only 17,000 people have resettled.²⁴⁹ In other words, the policy appears to be directed less towards actual goals of repatriating ethnic Russians back to Russia and more towards stoking up a feeling of nationalist pride for the grandiosity of the Russian project within the domestic Russian population. Russia thus must content itself with claiming imaginary sovereignty over foreign territories in which large number of Russians live, while many expatriate Russian populations themselves appear to be uninterested in strong ties with Russia. This outreach has the effect of stoking feelings of territorial acquisition without running the risk of armed confrontation with the West, a matter which Russia seems content to delay.

The Russian media’s focus on genetic similarities dovetails well with this sort of imaginary expansionism. While most Eurasianist thinkers emphasize the non-genetic or non-racial nature of Eurasia’s mission, a racial exclusionist tone often underlies their commentary. Indeed, as Roger Smith notes, leaders’ ethically based narratives often oscillate between universalism and xenophobic exclusion. More often, he says, these stories of peoplehood begin with an assertion of universal acceptance and transition into a more racially or ethnically exclusive narrative.²⁵⁰ Russia seems to be following this same trend, asserting a genetic exceptionalism of the many peoples of Eurasia while expressing anti-American or anti-Western sentiments outside of Russia. Native Americans represent another ally in the Eurasian expansion

²⁴⁸ Agria Grigas. “Putin’s ‘Compatriots’” *American Interest*. October 23, 2016, accessed October 20, 2018. <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2016/10/23/putins-compatriots/>

²⁴⁹ Ōncel Sencerman “The Russian Diaspora as a means of Russian foreign policy,” *Revista de Stiinte Politice*. Issue 49 (2016), 45. Accessed November 3, 2018. http://cis01.central.ucv.ro/revistadestiintepolitice/files/numarul49_2016/10.pdf

²⁵⁰ Smith *Stories of Peoplehood*, 88-89

narrative and in the resistance to Western imperialism through their deep historic/genetic connection with the civilizational Eurasian project. By asserting a genetic similarity, the Russian media expands the purview of its mission, conquering and integrating, at an imaginary level, new, Native American allies into its grand mission of opposing the Western hegemony. Russian audiences thus perceive an Indigenous population in the United States full of discontent at neoliberal hegemony, and Russia's long-oppressed kinsmen, the Native Americans are waiting to take up arms at the proper moment.

The control media, *BBC Russia*, rarely mentioned any sort of affinities between Native Americans and Russians. Indeed, for *BBC Russia*, the inverse was often true. While zero articles were coded for “Spiritual affinities between the West and Native Americans” in the Kremlin-aligned media, they were common in *BBC Russia*. These were mostly through mentions of Native Americans' ready acceptance of Christianity through Catholicism, including the canonization of an Indian woman, the first in the history of the Catholic Church. This article, about the canonization of the Mohawk nun Kateri Tekakwitha, states that “according to researcher Orenda Boucher, who lives among the Indians of Kahnawake, Kateri Tekakwitha was drawn to rituals, as the male Indians of the time hardened themselves before battle, so her Indian beliefs organically meshed with the Christian religion.”²⁵¹ This suggests a positive interaction between the Western colonizers and the Native Americans, whose essential belief system was not incompatible with a Western worldview. Such an interpretation undermines a cornerstone Eurasianist idea that the Orthodox Church alone could claim a natural benevolent integration of

²⁵¹ “U Amerikanskikh indeitsev poyavitsya pervaya syataya.” (“Among Americans Indians there will be a first Saint”). *BBC Russian*, October 20, 2012, accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.BBC.com/russian/society/2012/10/121018_first_native_indian_saint

Native Americans into the fold of the Eurasianist project. Another article from *BBC*'s travel section about the spirit of Hawaii asserts that native Hawaiians' "Aloha Spirit is used to argue that everyone in Hawaii can 'feel' and should accept the love for humanity... [and] says that the Aloha Spirit transcends race, differences and embraces togetherness or 'equality.'"²⁵² This suggests that just as Western Catholicism is compatible with Native Americans' traditional beliefs, so are Native Americans' beliefs and worldviews able to embrace Westerners. The Kremlin-oriented media's portrayal of Native Americans seem to allow no room for such an "organic" affinity between Native American and Western culture that *BBC Russia* portrays, which suggests that religious or spiritual cohesion plays a powerful role in the contemporary Eurasianist narrative.

5.3 Conclusion

In some ways, Russia's portrayal of Native Americans follows an old Soviet narrative that depicts the West as exploitative in its treatment of minority groups. The Kremlin-aligned media describe various Native American groups as lacking social services, failing to meaningfully contribute to the economy, and having no political recourse other than to attempt to secede from the nation. In the Soviet era, in accordance with a Marxist ideology, the media attributed Native Americans' poverty to class oppression that could be eliminated only through a proletarian revolution that would eventually sweep through the West. The Eurasianist narrative replaces this economic understanding of history with a broader cultural one that explains

²⁵² Breena Kerr. "In Hawaii, being nice is the law." *BBC Travel*. April 23, 2018, accessed October 21 2018. <http://www.BBC.com/travel/story/20180422-in-hawaii-being-nice-is-the-law>

Russia's material poverty as the result of attempted subjugation by the West and proclaims Russia to harbor hidden spiritual wealth. This narrative asserts genetic ties between Native Americans and the Eurasian continent and thus to the Russian state. Evidence of this bond lies in modern genetic studies that prove that Native Americans originated in Siberia, and in cultural ties, including hints of language and culture that persist in the New World, latent beneath the now-eroding hegemony of western capitalism. Eurasianism's assertion of an immutable bond between Native Americans and their own continent illustrates the profundity of the mission Russia sees itself enacting. Russia's portrayal of Indigenous peoples in America allows the country to satisfy expansionist and irredentist desires without setting boots on the ground, perpetuating the feeling of a tantalizingly close "conservative revolution" that will bring Eurasia's essential importance to the fore. This *imaginary expansion* into America embellishes the deep, archetypal importance Eurasia will serve in the coming era without risking military confrontation with the West.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 How Eurasianism is used

To liberal Westerners, Russia's political system is confounding. Economically, Russian citizens are subject to high rates of poverty, stagnant wages, and extreme rates of income inequality,²⁵³ while politically Russia lacks safeguards for an independent press, open elections, and minority representation in government.²⁵⁴ Despite this, the Putin regime has retained remarkably high approval ratings. The question of how the current regime, with its poor economic and political record, has managed to hold power is central to this thesis, and I posit that an important reason for the paradox lies in the underlying story the Kremlin propounds about the roots of Russia's civilizational unity. This story emerges from the philosophical ideas of Eurasianism and is illustrated by the analysis of the Kremlin-aligned media's portrayal of Indigenous Peoples, which presents the Russian polity as a scientifically inevitable phenomenon rooted in its sociological and geological conditions. This story serves as a powerful legitimizing tool for the Russian regime, affirming its moral righteousness in the face of social, political, and economic problems. The Eurasianist story and its application to Indigenous Peoples is an effective legitimating tool for the Kremlin for three major reasons: it reuses and repurposes many familiar Soviet ideological tenets, it provides an ostensibly scientifically grounded justification for the existence of the sprawling multi-ethnic Russia, and it offers Russia as a clear counterpole to the perceived dominating tendencies of the United States.

²⁵³ Martin, Russell. European Parliamentary Research Service. *Socioeconomic Inequality in Russia*. April 2018. Accessed February 2019.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2018/620225/EPRS_ATA\(2018\)620225_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2018/620225/EPRS_ATA(2018)620225_EN.pdf)

²⁵⁴ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2018: Russia*, accessed February 2019, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/russia>.

The roots of this portrayal lie in the Soviet Union's Marxist-Leninist ideology concerning the exploitative nature of capitalism and the progressive nature of history. To Soviet ideologists, Native Americans were exploited laborers whose lands were robbed for extraction and whose cultures were subsumed by destructive consumerism. On the other hand, the Soviet Union's own Indigenous Peoples have been portrayed as technologically backwards, but under the benevolent patronage of the ethnic Russians, capable of achieving their leap to classless socialism. This narrative emphasizes the economic reasons for Native Americans' relative poverty while offering Indigenous Russians the benefits of political patronage as they progress towards their economic emancipation. The narrative could explain away Indigenous Russians' relative poverty by offering faith in an egalitarian future, so long as they maintain faith in the Soviet Union's ability to direct their historical progression. The Soviet Union thus used its Marxist narrative to legitimize control over vast swathes of territory and peoples who were genetically and politically unrelated to their overlords in Moscow. When this narrative's legitimacy crumbled in the 1990s, it was hard for the far-flung provinces to feel affinity for an overbearing central government.

The Russia that lived through the chaos and political fragmentation of the 1990s needed a new legitimacy, and found it in the suppressed writings of its one-time exiles. Eurasianism, the new dominant narrative espoused by the Kremlin since the 2000s, reuses many of the same anti-Western tropes of the Soviet Union familiar to the Russian citizenry. Native Americans were still an exploited and oppressed class, but Eurasianism emphasized the cultural destructiveness of Liberalism more than its exploitative economic nature. Eurasianists stressed the benevolent patronage of Moscow over provincial people and territories, but through supposedly natural, irreversible processes of biology and sociology, rather than through a quest for universal

economic progress. This tenet placed Indigenous peoples as *subethnoi*, whose essential role was to strengthen the higher magnitude bonds of the *ethnos* and *superethnos*. The Kremlin's role transitioned from pushing Indigenous Peoples towards "civilization" to maintaining their distinct cultural and economic usefulness, so that they could perpetuate their natural and historical role of binding the Eurasian *superethnos*. By repurposing the Soviet idea of a hierarchy of people that is reflected in different statuses of its constituent states, the Putin regime uses the Gumilevian hierarchy of peoplehood in a way that gives value to Indigenous Peoples and their role in Eurasian civilization without recognizing them as independent political entities.

The second main use of Eurasianism in the Kremlin's ideology is its self-fulfilling suggestion of a natural, sociological basis for the unity of the Russian polity. This justification positions the wholeness of Eurasia as a scientific inevitability, which, due to its natural foundation, can only be threatened by the destructive and unnatural West. Episodes such as the suspension of RAIPON are explained as the result of nefarious Westerners bent on sowing discord between the Kremlin and Indigenous People, rather than legitimate instances of political tension. Early Eurasianist thinkers laid the ostensibly scientific groundwork for this train of thought. Founding Eurasianist Nikolai Trubetskoy's suggestion of a phonemic drift within Eurasia that would eventually bring the people of Eurasia to a convergence of features has, ironically, been shifted to the Russian language's uniting role for Eurasia's Indigenous People. In the West, the media portray language loss among Indigenous Peoples with alarmism and regret, while in Russia, the media mention the topic casually alongside bugle-calls to the unifying power of the Russian language. Language convergence is thus one of the themes

through which the Russian media touts the appropriateness of the Russian state's dominion over Indigenous Peoples which it portrays as both a cause and an effect of the power of Eurasia.

Lev Gumilev's hierarchy of associations of people and his insistence on scientific, sociological laws to govern their rise and fall also play an implicit role in the way the media portray Indigenous Peoples. Within Russia, Kremlin-aligned media portray Indigenous groups as valuable *subethnoi* contributing to the great mission of the Russian *superethnos*. Gumilev posited the importance of the *subethnoi* in supporting "ethnic unity by way of internal, non-antagonist resistance."²⁵⁵ The stronger and more numerous the *subethnoi*, the more powerful the *superethnos*. Gumilev argued that there was an ineffable energy of *passionarity* that led individual members of an *ethnos* to sacrifice themselves for the glory of the group. *Passionarity*, in Gumilev's understanding, was self-contained within an *ethnos* but could shift from member to member based on who would be able to achieve the most lasting effect. Thus individual members of Indigenous groups within Russia sometimes achieve prosperity, but are often portrayed as suffering for a greater good. In Soviet times, the media portrayed Indigenous Peoples (as well as the rest of the population) as achieving progressively better material conditions thanks to Marxist socialism. Today, the Kremlin-aligned media's portrayal of Indigenous Peoples still celebrates material prosperity,, but portrayals of native suffering are equally prominent, illustrating a triumph of the self-sacrificing spirit of *passionarity* in the contemporary Russian political narrative. In any case, the "scientific" nature of *passionarity* makes it not an aspirational goal for residents of Eurasia, but a fact of their existence.

²⁵⁵ Gumilev, Lev. *Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere*. <http://gumilevica.kulichki.net/English/ebe.htm>.

Finally, Eurasianism functions as a framework through which Russia can counterpose itself with the West, particularly in the way that it presents Indigenous Peoples. Neo-Eurasianism's vehement disparagement of Western values, and its emphasis on the super-political, uniting power of Orthodoxy, wields a clear influence in media portrayals of Indigenous Peoples. Stories that illustrate Native Americans' powerlessness and disenfranchisement vis-a-vis the U.S. federal government are repeated regularly, manifested prominently in Kremlin-aligned media's thorough coverage of the Dakota Access Pipeline protests and other episodes of political fragmentation along ethnic lines. Meanwhile, stories that involve the mutual resolution of long-standing problems, such as state and federal recognition of native tribes, devolution of political power, or resolution of land claims, are never mentioned in Kremlin-aligned sources. In the Eurasianist narrative, Western governments are inherently oppressive to minority groups and indifferent to Indigenous Peoples' organic ties to the land.

This disparagement of the West also flips the Soviet paradigm of atheism in exchange for an insistence on Russia's deep-rooted spirituality. The media present the Russian Orthodox Church as a social force for good among native people, whose diverse spiritual beliefs are subsumed by a view of Orthodoxy that is patriarchal, but secular. Orthodoxy is construed as a broad, conservative force that serves as a spiritual glue for Eurasian peoples, without providing any transcendent moral commandments, as evangelical Christianity might in the West. The media emphasizes the Orthodox Church's role as a conscience for Russia's political establishment in its coverage of the Patriarch of Moscow's calls for better social and economic treatment of small-numbered peoples. Meanwhile, the Orthodox Church plays a surprisingly prominent role in the media's portrayal of Alaska Native peoples, through its coverage of the

history of Russian America. Kremlin-aligned newspapers portray Orthodoxy as naturally fitting for the Native Americans, many of whom still profess the Orthodox faith. Alaska Natives' profession of Orthodoxy affirms the imaginary expansion of the Eurasianist idea. At the same time, the Kremlin-aligned media ignore any possibility of a similar Native American spiritual affinity to Catholicism or Protestantism. News events such as the canonization of a Native American woman into Catholicism, which were celebrated in Western media, were ignored in Kremlin-aligned sources, suggesting an incongruity with the prevailing Eurasianist narrative in Russia.

6.2 Research Conclusions

The research component of this project served to highlight the ways that this narrative is applied in the Kremlin's information sphere in their portrayal of Indigenous People. The current media landscape in Russia shows that while outlets are free to make independent decisions about reporting and seek out interesting stories, the Kremlin-aligned media avoid certain themes. I designed my research protocol to allow both quantitative and qualitative data analysis that could compare the Kremlin-aligned media to independent media to tease out the emphasis (measured quantitatively) of themes, as well as the qualitative aspects of how Eurasianism's development in the media.

Quantitatively, for example, I compared the amount of coverage that suggestions of genetic and cultural connections between Native Americans and Indigenous Russians received in Kremlin-aligned versus independent media to quantify the strong emphasis on this theme. Likewise, the Kremlin-aligned media's trumpeting of Orthodoxy among Alaska Natives and its

ignoring of positive aspects of non-Orthodox Christians' role in the colonization of America showed how Orthodoxy is portrayed as an essential "Eurasian" inclination among Indigenous Peoples of America. Qualitatively, I analyzed exactly how the media developed these themes. The counterposing of Russia's treatment of Indigenous Peoples with America's "monstrous" genocide of Native Americans showed the use of the Eurasianist idea of the destructiveness of the West towards minority cultures. The qualitative portion also revealed a portrayal of Native Americans as having surreptitious affinities towards Russians as seen in their ostensible wish to have stable, spiritual cultures overseen by the benevolent patriarchy of Russia.

The limitations of my research component were several. The use of news media, while helpful, was limited by the quantity of outlets I could analyze, the fact that they were only print media, and the incomplete picture that mass media can paint in its formation of a narrative. The quantity of articles I could reasonably analyze also contributed to an incomplete knowledge of the story propounded by the Kremlin. Lack of available data from the 1990s and the Soviet period also prohibited a chronological analysis of how the narrative may (or may not) have changed. Finally, the focus on Eurasianist narrative precluded following other alternative explanations for how Indigenous Peoples are framed. Still, some of the limitations offered insight into how the Russian media function. Lack of sufficient data for *RT*, for example, illustrated the priority that disparagement of the West has over the formation of a cohesive model of Eurasian civilization, at least for that news outlet. Disparities between the presentation of federal-Indigenous relations in Canada and the United States by Kremlin-aligned media showed the focus on disparaging the U.S. treatment of Indigenous Peoples, while softening perceptions of Canada's past mistreatment. This variance perhaps illustrates Russia's wish to open the door

for more cooperation with Canada, for settlement of disputes over waterway rights in the Northwest Passage and Northern Sea Routes. Nonetheless, future research protocols could be changed to exclude Canadian-focused news so that the results are more focused on Russia's presentation of the United States. Other improvements might include expanding the range of news outlets and sharpening the coding procedures to reflect more nuance in the coding scheme. Lastly, avenues for future research based on this project could include expanding from just small-numbered peoples to include larger ethnic minorities such as Yakuts, Chechens, and Ukrainians, which serve similar roles for the Kremlin, but with more direct geopolitical implications. Such a project would require more resources to deal with the larger amounts of data. Another direction could be to analyze the portrayals of Western-oriented Kremlin-aligned media such as *RBTH (Russia Behind the Headlines)* and *Sputnik* to understand how Russia's information campaign differs when oriented towards international audiences. Finally, the data as analyzed do not yet reflect the perceptions of the Russian population; future research could include polling of Russian citizens to understand their perceptions of Indigenous Peoples and how they relate to the Eurasian model of civilization.

6.3 Theoretical significance

In a theoretical sense, I hope this project helps to sharpen understanding of how narratives can inspire people-building through non-racial and non-economic stories. The Eurasianist narrative conforms to what Roger Smith called "ethically constitutive stories" that emphasize a way of acting--an ethic--of a certain people that separates them from others. For Eurasians, this ethic is in harmony with nature, which has shaped the people of Eurasia through a

historical dialectic process that has imbued on them the qualities of rootedness, traditionalism and morality. This ethic is counterposed to the West's insistence on creative destruction, economic and historical progress, and an absence of universal morality. The Eurasian narrative gives the people of Eurasia a feeling of worth and of rootedness in a fast-changing, globalizing world that is attractive for many people within and outside of Russia. The country's success in garnering admirers in the Western far right attests to how these themes resonate with a global audience.

Related to this international outlook, the Eurasianist narrative also leaves room for further expansion. As shown through the study of portrayals of Indigenous Peoples, the narrative allows for a reintegration of long-lost genetic descendants of the ethical idea of Eurasianness, who live with the same predisposition towards spiritual living and moral righteousness. This trope was used during the annexation of Crimea to imply that Indigenous Tatars living on the peninsula had a suppressed desire to leave Ukraine and join the Russian Federation, which in turn vindicated the righteousness of that project. The Kremlin-aligned media similarly imply a hidden affinity towards Russia in Native Americans. Its emphasis on studies that genetically and culturally link the people of Eurasia with Native Americans suggests a rising Russia. It also opens the possibility of remaining cultural heritage in Russian America that suggests underlying political sympathies. The regime can thus project broad, latent support for its civilizational vision among minorities, legitimizing expansionist thinking in the hope of inspiring public support.

While this story has thus far been effective in shoring up support from domestic audiences, it comes with a dark side that can trouble Western audiences. While the population might feel patriotic, Russia's Indigenous Peoples suffer from poor social and political conditions.

The suspension of RAIPON sharply curtailed political representation of the interests of Indigenous Peoples in Russia, yet the Kremlin-aligned media ignored this incident. Indigenous leaders whose stories were even less reported were subjected to Mafioso-style violence and intimidation for standing up to industrial development in their homelands.²⁵⁶ As non-signatories to the major international Indigenous rights documents, the International Labor Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, the Putin regime can posit its standing on moral high ground through its alternative paradigm that de-emphasizes human rights in favor of a naturalistic understanding of development of civilization. The Kremlin's media campaign often obfuscates real issues that relate to Indigenous Peoples in Russia.

Most importantly, this project can help cultivate an appreciation of the diverse ways in which ideas and narratives resonate with peoples. The Eurasianist vision is intricate, complex, and compelling in a way that is usually oversimplified by Westerners who see the worst and most threatening part of it. By explicating the nuances of Eurasianism--and the ways that political stories are constructed in general--this project can contribute to acknowledgement of the complicated historical development of the ideas that shaped modern Russia, of which Indigenous Peoples are an important part.

²⁵⁶ Cultural Survival. "Observations on the State of Indigenous Human Rights in the Russian Federation," 30th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review May 2017, accessed October 24, 2018. <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/sites/default/files/UPR-Report-Russian-Federation-2017.pdf>.

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